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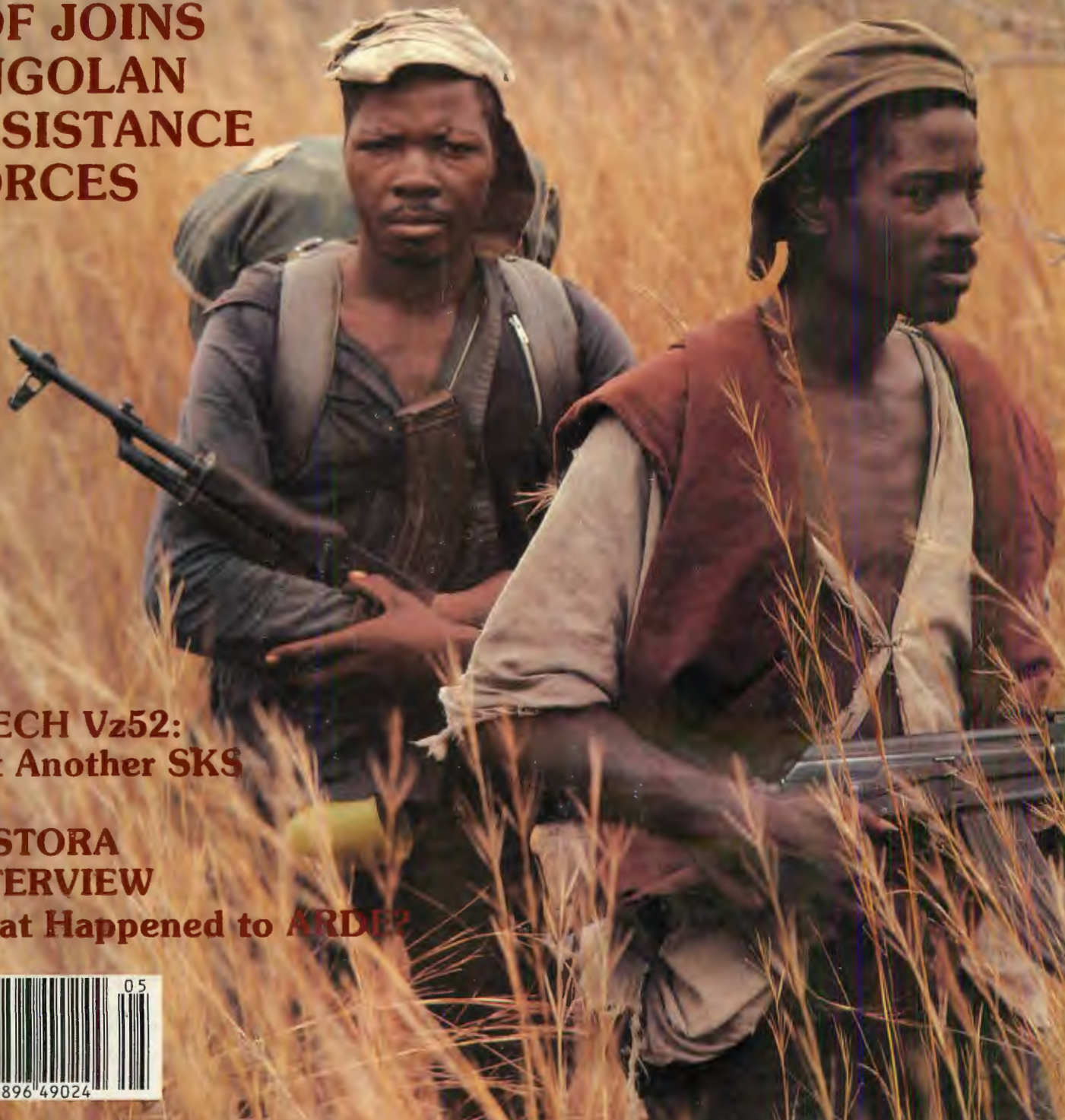
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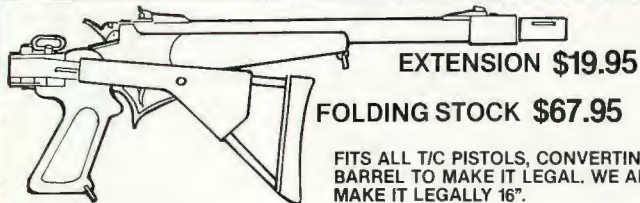
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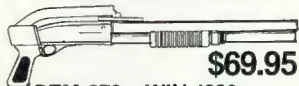
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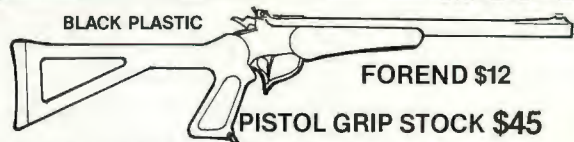


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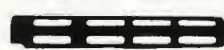
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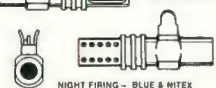


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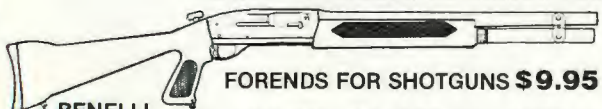
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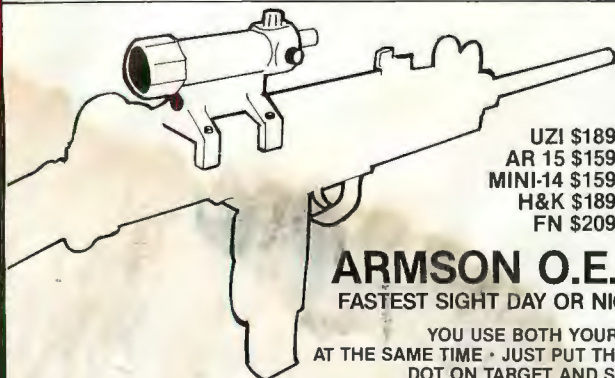


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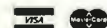
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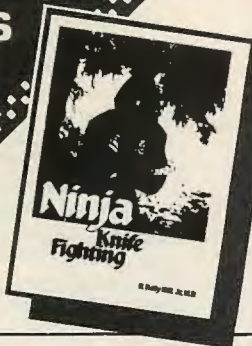
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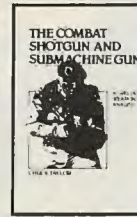


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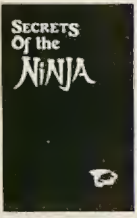


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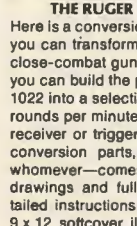


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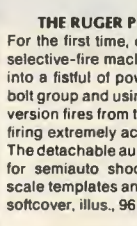
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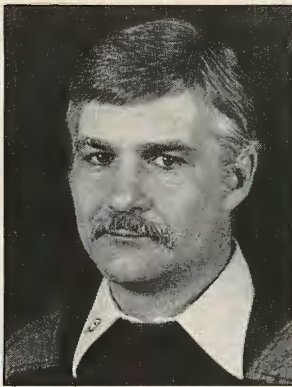


DE-BRIEF

by Dale A. Dye, Executive Editor

AT the risk of ticking off a lot of innocent Texans, I think we should write the governor of that great state and ask him to haul down the flag that flies over the Alamo ... at least until they can bring the military situation there into line with the spirit and sacrifice of the citizen-soldiers who died in that great battle back in 1836. The spirit of the Alamo — patriotism, self-sacrifice, devotion to principles and ideals, the role of militia in national security — is being desecrated in Texas. Unfortunately, indications are that the Lone Star State is not alone in what amounts to a sleazy slandering of an American tradition that has been a source of pride since the Minute-men of our Revolutionary War.

At issue in Texas is the recently disbanded 105th Military Police Battalion of the Texas State Guard. It was one of 31 battalions of the TSG which constitutes an unpaid volunteer organization tasked with specified roles in state and national emergencies such as disaster relief or filling in for National Guard units in the event of mobilization.



In other words, the TSG is a militia supposedly composed of the same sort of patriots who fired the shot heard around the world at Concord Bridge and those who died with Colonel Austin and his men at the Alamo. There are undoubtedly patriots in the TSG, but they *do not* belong to a militia. They are not allowed that privilege.

When the 105th MPs purged their ranks of out-of-state college students serving only for a financial break on tuition at Texas schools, reorganized for realistic training and tried to be militiamen, the CO

was summarily relieved and the unit ultimately ordered dispersed. The lightning bolt was hurled by a network of "good ole boy" senior commanders in the TSG who are old enough to have worn pie-plate helmets and used '03 Springfield rifles — if they had any active military service at all. The unit was nailed for (*gasp!*) being too military, too gung-ho and too anxious to be combat-ready.

Despite the fact that the 105th MPs were frequently cited as "the finest battalion in the Guard" by Army Reserve and National Guard observers, the TSG Soda Pop and Social Club could not tolerate a unit that (*gasp!* again) bought their own tactical vehicles, trained with (unloaded) weapons or purchased and wore camouflaged BDUs *just like real soldiers.*

Such soldierly activity simply would not do when the TSG had in mind using the 105th and other militia units to rattle locks on National Guard armory doors during drills, study "community relations" or polish floors. Motivated militiamen were branded renegades, ordered to leave their shooting irons at home, take off the BDUs, don olive-drab pickle suits and get, by God, in step with the program. Texas newspapers that covered the story like white on rice were told that the 105th was not a combat unit and would not be allowed to become one.

End of story. Except that the militiamen of the 105th weren't buying the decision. They continue to train on their own for duty in scenarios such as riot control and anti-looter operations, evacuation procedures

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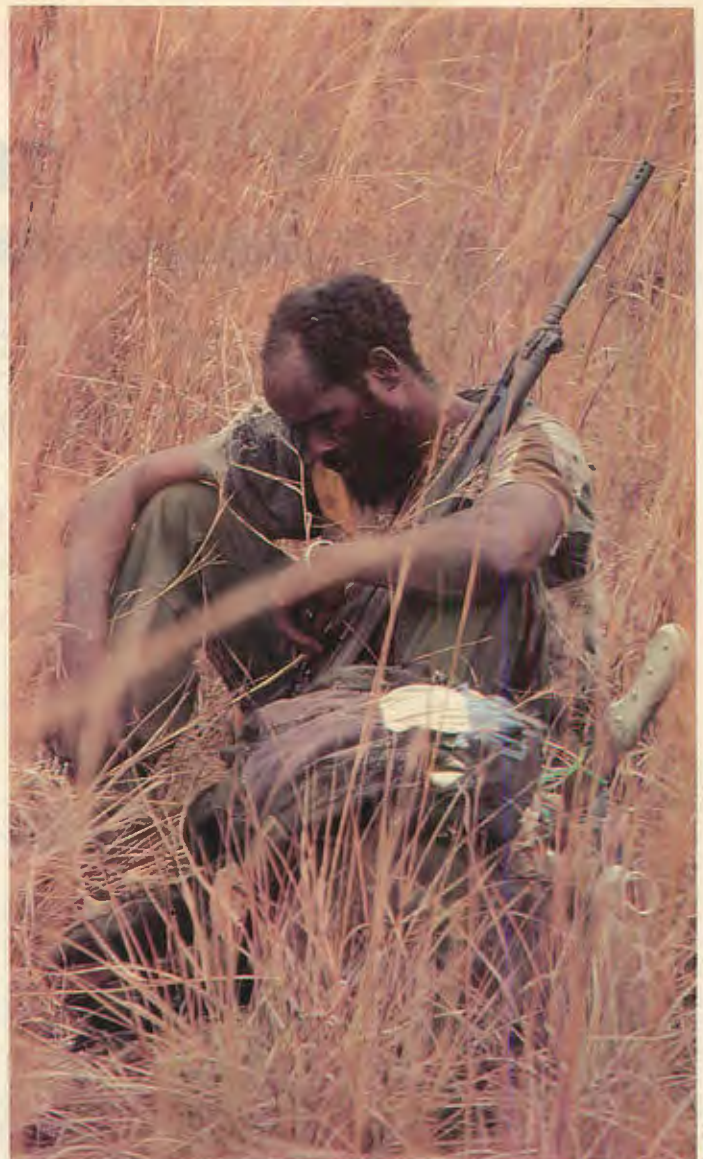
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COVER: Ragged, starved, diseased and burdened with empty, broken firearms, FNLA troops haunt the bush trails of Northern Angola, patrolling the land the Marxist government doesn't physically hold. SOF correspondent David Mills walked nearly 1,000 miles and survived three FAPLA ambushes with the freedom fighters to report on this stalemated war of liberation. The story of his trek and the continuing civil war begins on p. 50. Photo: David Mills

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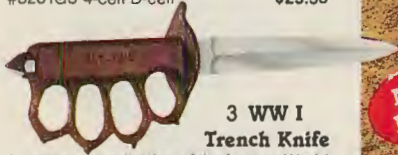
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Discreet, Effective Protection. Powerful spring-loaded hardened 4 1/2" steel shaft snaps open in 1/250th sec., locks open. Knurled grip prevents slipping. Blued finish. 10 1/2" open, 5 1/2" closed.

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11

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8 Lifeknife Commando

The best survival knife there is. Razor-sharp 6" blade constructed from 440C stainless steel heat treated to RH57-58. Aircraft aluminum hollow handle is waterproof and contains wire saw, matches, survival fish hooks, assorted split shot, 20 ft. of 10 lb. test line, 6 ft. snare utility wire; needles; sutures. Black leather belt sheath, thongs and sharpening stone. A jeweled compass built into the cap. 12" overall.

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8

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12 GI M-65 Field Jacket

The very latest US Army issue field jacket made of 50/50 nylon-cotton with gov't. Quarrel water repellency. Features a zip-in hood, heavy-duty front zipper plus snap closures, drawstrings at both the waist and bottom of the jacket—plus extra room in the shoulders for complete freedom of movement. Sizes: S, M, L, XL.

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Cold weather liner that turns the M-65 into an all weather jacket. Sizes: S, M, L, XL.

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12

SPECIAL \$24.95



13

14



13 Little Black Box

Automatically starts recorder when telephone is picked up. Records entire conversation on both sides. Then automatically stops recorder when phone is hung up! It can be attached anywhere along the line and plugs into ANY recorder and causes absolutely no interference or noise on the phone. MINIATURE! Only 2" x 2" x 3/4".

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For free convention information packet write: SOF Convention, Inc., 4901 Indian Trail, Wilmington, NC 28403. For free Combat Weapons Military Expo information write: William Weber, 17100 Norwalk Blvd., Suite 116, Cerritos, CA 90701



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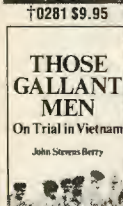
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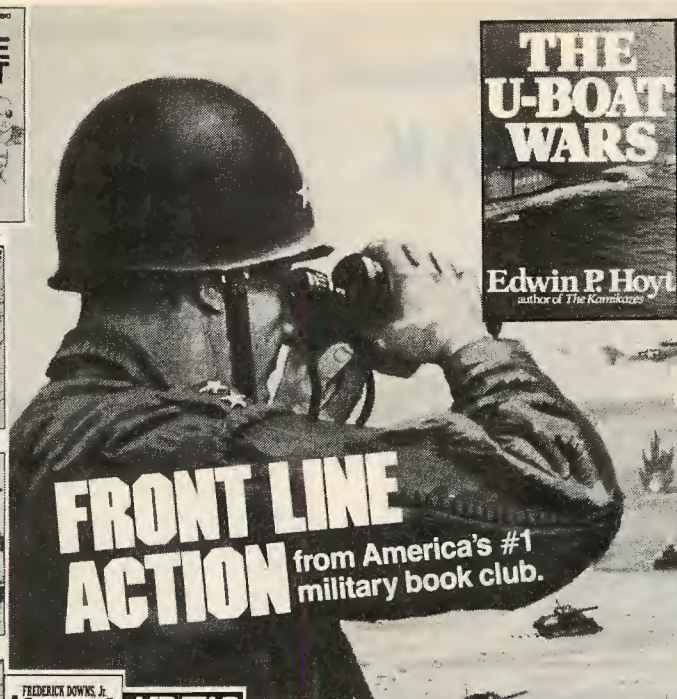
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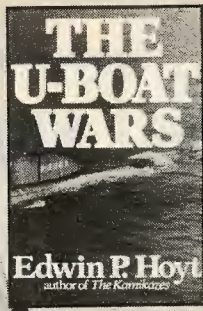
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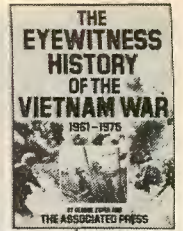
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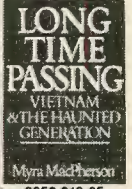
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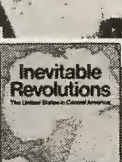
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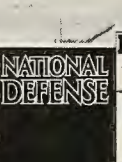
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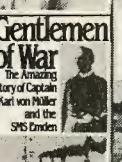
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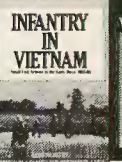
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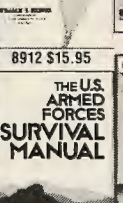
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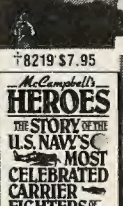
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THANKS FOR THE NEW MANUAL...

Sirs:

Just a word to thank you for two copies of the Spanish manual I have received: "Operaciones Sicológicas en Guerra de Guerrillas."

You did an excellent work. It is handier than the original version or first printing. It reads better. The cover is well done. The color fits the text.

Hope you are able to reverse the wrong initial understanding of the true value and use of the manual.

Congratulations.

Thanks again.

Sincerely yours,
Edgar Chamorro
Former Director F.D.N.

SOF decided to reprint the psychological warfare manual in English and Spanish to show how inaccurately the book had been characterized. And we appreciate the notice from such a distinguished freedom fighter as Edgar Chamorro.

BREN GRINS...

Sirs:

I have just read SOF's brilliant article on the Bren Light Machine Gun. Having served with the British Army, I was trained in the use of this weapon and enjoyed every shot I fired. Well done, Peter Kokalis. There are rumors inside the British services that a new weapon will be taking the place of the Bren and maybe the Sterling SMG as well. I hope not.

Stuart Emmett
West Yorkshire,
England

We always try to hit the target with our weapons articles and Peter Kokalis is quite a marksman. Thanks for the kind words regarding our coverage of the Bren LMG.



FLAK



I BEG TO DIFFER...

Sirs:

As a former officer in the British Indian Army, perhaps I might be allowed to comment regarding the SOF article, "The Battle of the Golden Temple," in the January issue. While personally regretting the path that independent India has taken towards close links with the Soviet empire, I feel the report is not quite fairly balanced. The author's very name "Singh" being, as you say, typically Sikh indicates right away that there is a degree of bias, which there was. As a subscriber I regret to read a report which is not up to your usual impartial standard.

Major C.P. Maitland (Ret.)
Former 5th Indian Division
West Germany

We appreciate your insightful perspective, Major. While SOF's author was indeed a Sikh, we did check out the charges regarding simultaneous attacks on Sikh enclaves in other parts of the country and the "rumors" that some Sikhs were being shot on sight by government troops. These allegations were confirmed by independent sources. We do admit to an error in not mentioning the fact that the Sikhs were stocking arms and ammunition in the Golden Temple prior to the government attack. This should have been included in the report.



RESPECT FOR RP KNIVES...

Sirs:

I must demand the return of my knife, Serial No. 984294 which was furnished to you at the September '84 SOF Convention in Las Vegas for objective testing, which was not done, and for use in an article. I need the knife to redress the damage which has been done by Bill Bagwell's article. It should have been returned at the time Bagwell broke the blade of the knife so I could submit it for testing by Crucible Steel Corp. or whoever they appoint. It will now take 60-90 days from receipt of the knife to obtain results of any testing of the broken blade. It is unconscionable that you allowed the 90-day lead time for the article to be published to go by without any communication to me concerning the article's contents and results of Bagwell's testing which was arbitrarily done, and without any validity.

The true test is the fact that there are over 300 of my knives in hard use in 10 countries without complaint from a single customer. True hard use of a knife under all conditions is the only valid test that can be conducted, not putting a blade in a vise and breaking it. I stand behind my lifetime guarantee against material defects or workmanship.

It is most shocking to discover by reading in the magazine an article which features my product, in such an unfavorable way, without any warning in advance of publication. I also believe that allowing Bill Bagwell to write a column for SOF or SURVIVE about knives can only damage your magazine's credibility with its readership. It is ludicrous to believe that a knifemaker can be objective in writing articles about knives, especially one who expresses blatant prejudice toward any knife other than his own or forged blades, as is evident in SOF's "Battle Blades" column published in the February '85 issue, the March '85 issue and Survive magazine's articles by Bill Bagwell in the March '85 issue.

Robert Parrish
Hendersonville, North
Carolina

In the overview, the review was more a slam of generic types than your knife in particular. In fact, Bagwell indicates that yours is among the best of its type. We have respect for RP Knives as well as an obligation to air objective reports.

PLEA FROM DOWN UNDER...

Sirs:

This is a cry for help. SOF doesn't have a correspondent covering the Australian area of operations. This is particularly true of the fierce struggle of freedom fighters against invading Indonesian forces in the former Portuguese colony of East Timor, 462 nautical miles northwest of Darwin. I hope someone in the U.S. will take notice of that oppressive government's attempt at genocide of the local population there, which it hopes to replace with Asian immigrants from Java. By the way, SOF is very hard to get in Australia. I am going to subscribe because it is banned outright in my state.

D. Howatson
Australia

SOF's editors have been very closely following the fighting in East Timor between Indonesians and the Fretilin. The magazine has made some attempts to get people into the area but has been shut down cold by either outside support agencies or the Indonesians. It's a tough nut to crack but we intend to keep pounding on it. We are also following the situation in New Caledonia with interest.



SMALL GRIPE...

Sirs:

As a subscriber, I enjoy your magazine but I have one minor complaint. In some of your articles the print is placed over a blow-up of photographs. In some cases it is hard to read the words because they blend in so well with the photograph.

John P. Kuhns
Weirton, West Virginia

Your complaint regarding difficulty in reading some of our overprinted material has been passed along to SOF's art director, Craig Nunn. He reports that it is generally an inking problem at the plant, but he promises to stay on the printers to see that our material which is run over photographs is more readable in the future.

AUSTRALIAN CONCERN FOR KPNLF...

Sirs:

Over recent weeks in Cambodia the Vietnamese have been conducting their annual dry-season offensive against the resistance groups. The main focus of attention of the Vietnamese has been the KPNLF. While this may evoke images of the Vietcong, the KPNLF is the only non-communist resistance group which professes the ideals of democracy and freedom which all would agree with.

The salient point is that they need aid in the form of arms and ammunition. I would hope that this righteous anti-communist liberation movement for the Khmer people is not let down. We can't allow the gang of vultures in Hanoi to crush the KPNLF. Strong, conservative governments cannot let the spectre of the Vietnam war stop us from active involvement in the region. Many Australians such as myself are deeply suspicious of our own government's friendliness towards North Vietnam and are confident that America will do what it can to help the KPNLF.

Andrew Elder
Victoria, Australia

We are obviously kindred spirits with at least some of you down under regarding the KPNLF. We continue to urge active involvement and support in the anti-communist effort in Southeast Asia. Letters like yours indicate we are hitting the mark among our readers around the world.

SWISS CONCERN FOR AFGHANS...

Sirs:

The people of Afghanistan have been oppressed by Soviet invaders for the last five years in one of the cruelest examples of systematic genocide our world has seen in decades. This strikes not only at the heart of the liberty, peace and well-being of all Afghans, but of the entire world. But why do democratic governments for the most part ignore this criminal war as the planetary menace that it is? Because of this apparent ignorance, cowardice and injustice, a small group of young Swiss idealists intends to organize in Switzerland to support the freedom fighters morally and materially. Two members of our group already met with an SOF staffer inside Afghanistan last summer. We are convinced that all support groups for the Afghans should work together to increase the influence on behalf of our compatriots in Afghanistan.

Emil Aeme
Zurich, Switzerland

Thanks for your thoughts on communist expansionism around the world, particularly in Afghanistan. We obviously support your efforts and hope to see more like them, particularly in Europe.

SUKHOI CORRECTION...

Sirs:

I would like to make a correction to your sidebar on page 39 of the February issue of SOF. The SU-17 Fitter (Sukhoi) is not a swing-wing aircraft, as the magazine stated, but a swept-wing aircraft. It employs the same basic fuselage and tail surfaces as the MiG-21 Fishbed. It embodies features dictated by its primary role of ground attack, including a wing with a leading-edge sweep angle of 62 degrees, compared to the 57-degree leading-edge sweep angle of the Fishbed delta wing. Keep up the good work.

George Jakubowicz
Reading, Massachusetts

Roger your corrections. Thanks for keeping us squared away on combat aircraft. We made an error in our research. ✕

THEY'RE nasty, devious devices but in this age of brush wars raging throughout the Third World, they have become household words. On the heels of casualty lists resulting from all of America's wars and combat actions come the tales of sinister booby-traps.

The fiendish devices know practically no bounds. If something can cause a casualty, it can probably be made into a booby-trap. That's one of the reasons people headed for a combat zone need training in this form of warfare: so they can employ it to inflict casualties on the enemy. The other reason for familiarity with booby-traps is so you can avoid falling victim to an enemy device.

They can be used for everything from retarding enemy movement to serving as guards around a defensive perimeter. In fact, the flexibility of booby-traps is only limited by the imagination of the soldiers using them.

In the offensive, booby-trap placement will effectively deny areas to an enemy unit resisting the advance. Recon patrols or special-operations units surging ahead of a main body can booby-trap likely sights for ambushes or enemy rallying positions to create fear and disorder. Booby-traps have a tremendous psychological impact on the battlefield as many Vietnam veterans will attest. Movement to contact is drastically slowed if a unit suspects — or knows from painful experience — that there are traps in the area. Effective placement of booby-traps can literally destroy the momentum of an attack. It's easy to do, but the U.S. military has gotten away from instruction for the average soldier or Marine following the war in Southeast Asia.

In these days of indiscriminate terrorism, that might stem from fear of spreading dangerous knowledge without adequate control. Still, it hardly justifies failure to familiarize our soldiers with the offensive and defensive use of one of modern warfare's most deadly techniques. Most soldiers get a brief indoctrination in basic training, but the military continues to limit most training to employment of ready-made devices like Claymores while they neglect the fertile fields of improvised booby-traps. That's where American ingenuity can really shine and be most effective.

Out of the Vietnam experience came a treasure trove of information concerning the construction and employment of many deadly devices. Most — such as the infamous, infectious *punji* stake, the "Malayan Whip" and any number of variations on those themes — were constructed from materials commonly found in the field. That's ingenuity, and it was frequently turned around on the enemy to make him a bit more leery about romping through the jungles. Clandestine operators such as SF, Marine Force Recon and LRRPs became most adept at



COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

BOOBY TRAPS: Makeshift Mayhem

by Greg Walker



BOOBY TRAPPING IN THE BUSH

Mr. Walker's background includes 10 years of active military service, including two years of police work. Most recently he has served in Central America where booby-trapping is rampant. His insights are based upon the many killed or maimed by this little-explored subject.

screwing up the bad guy's health record by leaving booby-traps in areas behind what the enemy thought was *his* line.

Virtually any situation can be exploited by a soldier trained to booby-trap and take advantage of it. After a fire fight, the bodies of enemy or friendly troopers can be rigged with explosives to give pursuit teams cause to cease their assault. Imagine turning over a body while searching for documents only to have a grenade go off in your face. The Japanese used this technique in the Pacific with good effect

on U.S. Marines who quickly learned to leave KIAs alone or turn them over with a long stick before approaching for closer inspection.

Just take a grenade, pull the pin and roll a corpse on top of it in such a way that the dead weight will hold the safety lever in place. When the body is pulled clear of the grenade, the spoon flies off and — boom. It's hard to run fast enough to get away from that one and it's very likely to work every time.

After a successful ambush, the winning team goes through the dead soldiers' gear looking for intelligence items. That's just another opportunity for the smart soldier to employ a booby-trap. Packs, weapons and other equipment likely to cause interest or curiosity can be left behind in the path of a pursuing enemy and rigged with grenades or trip wires leading to fuses of other explosive devices. There's never any reason to suspect an enemy isn't as souvenir-hungry as we generally are.

Continued on page 103

Proudly Presenting...

THE AIRBORNE COMMEMORATIVE FIGHTING KNIFE

A limited edition of 2500, embellished with 24-karat gold, honoring America's Airborne Forces. This is the first in the series, "The American Elite Forces Fighting Knife Collection," which personifies the confidence needed to fight outnumbered and win!



Knife length: 12 1/2"

Airborne All The Way, Sir!

The dedicated Americans of our elite force units are hand picked, highly trained, especially physically fit, motivated in the extreme and ready at a moment's notice to enter the jaws of death—to fight outnumbered in defense of our freedom.

The American Historical Foundation is proud to honor these often-unheralded heroes through "The American Elite Forces Fighting Knife Collection."

The first knife in this series—now available—pays tribute to U.S. Airborne Forces. This is a strictly limited edition of only 2500. Serial No. 1 is being presented to the Infantry Museum at Ft. Benning—where the Airborne was founded.

The Airborne Commemorative Fighting Knife is a deluxe, hand finished Ek Commando Knife, Model No. 4. Since 1941, Ek knives have proven themselves in the hands of American military men on the battlefields of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. They are one of the—if not the—leading private-purchase military fighting knives in American history.

The Airborne Commemorative Fighting Knife is bench made by the Ek Commando Knife Company. Their motto is "Made in America, by Americans, for Americans"—and they mean it!

Most Ek Commando Knives were available only to active-duty military personnel—which is why they are better known among veterans than among civilian collectors. This marks the first time a special, presentation-grade Ek Commando Fighting Knife has ever been announced to the general arms-collecting public. But only 2500 of the Airborne Commemorative knives will be made.

A Battleworthy Fighting Knife

This is a double-edged, battleworthy fighting knife. It is one of the strongest knives in the world because it is made with more steel than any other knife of its type and size—with a full-length, full-width tang, which extends 3/4" beyond the grips to form the distinctive Ek "skull-crusher" butt.

The unique Ek "handprint" grips are perfectly contoured to fit the thumb and the ball of the hand, for maximum thrusting power. For this Airborne Commemorative, the grips are shaped from rugged, maroon-rosewood laminates—representative of the maroon beret, universally symbolic of Airborne forces.

24-Karat Gold Plating

A finely detailed Airborne drop zone combat scene is deeply etched along the full length of the 6 3/4" blade, which is made of special Ek high-carbon stainless surgical steel. To highlight this pattern, the etched areas are plated with pure 24-karat gold. The jump wings—the badge of honor of America's "sky soldiers" and Airborne-qualified personnel of other service branches—with the motto "Airborne All The Way!" are proudly gold etched in the center. Even the extended butt is elaborately gold etched with the laurel leaf motif of victory.

This special collector's edition introduces lathe-turned "X"-head screws to affix the grips. Custom made of solid brass, these are mirror polished and heavily plated with pure 24-karat gold. The cross-guard is thick, mirror polished solid brass, also plated with 24-karat gold.

The limited edition serial number between 0001 and 2500 is engraved on the blade shoulder, inscribed on the accompanying Certificate of Authenticity and registered with the Foundation—your further assurance of this strict edition limit.

First Option; No Obligation

When you reserve the Airborne Commemorative Fighting Knife, you are also guaranteed first option, without obligation, to reserve subsequent knives in "The American Elite Forces Fighting Knife Collection" one at a time in the months ahead. This way you can systematically acquire a complete set with matching serial numbers, on a convenient basis. These knives will honor U.S. Army Special Forces, U.S. Army Rangers, U.S. Navy SEAL/UDT, U.S. Marine Recon and U.S.A.F. Air Special Operations. They will be different models and variants of famous Ek military fighting knives, with different grip materials and blade combat scenes.

The Airborne Commemorative Fighting Knife is shown with the optional display case. This is genuine solid mahogany routed to perfectly hold and display your knife. A sliding plexiglass lid protects the knife from dust and unauthorized handling. The case, which measures 14" x 5" x 1 1/2", can be easily wall mounted with the two brackets provided.

Whether or not you or a member of your family served in an elite force unit, your ownership and display of this knife will show your patriotic pride in our

military and in the Americans who have defended our country in the past and who stand ready, today, to fight, if called.

How To Reserve

To place your reservation, you may call (a toll free number is available), use the reservation on this page or personally visit our headquarters. Satisfaction is guaranteed, or return within one month for a full refund. There are no shipping charges. For an additional \$15 we will personalize your knife by engraving your name, rank, and serial number on the blade reverse. If you wish Air Assault, Glider, Rigger, or USN/USMC jump wings etched on the blade reverse, just add \$10.

When you place your reservation you will also be made a Member of The American Historical Foundation, and receive special information concerning the care and collecting of military arms and advance notice of all Foundation military projects. This is available exclusively through the Foundation.

Ek Commando Knives are extremely rare, so prompt action is suggested while these are available.

RESERVATION

Satisfaction Guaranteed or Return in 30 Days
To: The American Historical Foundation
1022 West Franklin Street, Dept. A22
Richmond, Virginia 23220
Telephone: (804) 353-1812

24-hour toll free reservations: (800) 368-8080

Yes, I wish to reserve the Limited Edition Airborne Commemorative Fighting Knife, with 24-karat gold plating and deeply etched combat scene. I will also receive a Certificate of Authenticity and information concerning the history, care, and display of this knife and membership in the Foundation. No shipping charges. Satisfaction guaranteed.

No payment at this time. Please charge or invoice...
 in two payments of \$97.50 per month.
 in full.

My payment in full of \$195 is enclosed.

Please also send the Mahogany Display Case, adding \$24 to the balance.

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For Visa, MasterCard or American Express, please send account number, exp. date and signature. Virginia residents add tax.

ONLY one thing matters in a knife fight. *You've got to live through it.* This is not the first rule, it is the *only* rule.

Bear in mind that a person who is skilled in the art of hand-to-hand combat will kill an unskilled person with monotonous regularity. Skill comes with knowledge and practice, and the proper application of this acquired skill will put you on the plus side of the ledger when things get down and dirty.

In its most basic terms, a knife fight is an engagement where one person tries to cut another person without getting cut himself. That's elementary. But the majority of people I talk to don't seem to understand the statement.

Worse, many people I talk tactics with seem to be perfectly willing to take a blow to deliver a blow. Some even say they'll block my blade with their forearm, and then deliver a blow of their own. That kind of thinking will get them killed if they fight the right guy with the right knife.

If you want to get really and truly prepared for this sort of thing, the first thing you should do is to check your own knife out. At a bare minimum, you should have a knife that will cut a free-hanging, one-inch manila rope in two with one stroke. Double-edged daggers are out — they won't slash and are completely devoid of the balance necessary to cut bone.

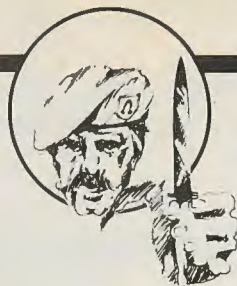
If you don't believe that, take an old pair of jeans and put a piece of wood or cardboard inside one of the legs. Now take your shaving-sharp dagger and try to slash, not stab, through the denim and cut the wood. If you can't slice through the clothes your opponent is wearing, you are in for a very unpleasant afternoon.

Ideally, the knife you should have is a good Bowie knife with a blade somewhere between nine and 10 inches long, depending on your size. Get a good one that weighs between 13 and 17 ounces, and is quick in your hand. It is your money and your life, so make damn sure that the knife of your choice will cut the one-inch rope.

Why the emphasis on the Bowie knife and the rope cut? If the knife is quick enough and powerful enough to cut a free-hanging one-inch manila rope with one stroke, it can fatally wound your adversary with one blow. A stroke to the back of the hand, or wrist, or anywhere on the arm or leg with such a knife will result in a cut so severe that the recipient of such a wound will expire in short order if the laceration is not tended to immediately. And he may not make it even then.

This is not conjecture, it is cold, hard fact. To disbelieve it is to place yourself in harm's way. To ignore this fact borders on stupidity.

And why the Bowie? A Bowie knife



BATTLE BLADES

by Bill Bagwell

FIGHTING FOR KEEPS



Tools, technique and practice: Knife and style must help you slash, stab and — above all — not get cut.
Photo: Bill Guthrie

is unique among edged weapons. No other edged weapon will do so many different things and do them as well as will this knife. Only this knife gives the piercing and stabbing ability of the dagger, the slashing ability of a razor, the power and chopping ability of a kukri or cleaver, and a superior cutting ability on the backstroke. Other knives can do some of these things as well, but no other knife gives you such a variety of angles to attack or the ability to make cuts off of defensive parries in a single design.

True, the Bowie has been around over 150 years. But we would do well

to consider the fact that as a knife-using and knife-wielding society, our skills today are nowhere near as refined as those of our forefathers. The knife was a primary weapon then, and had not fallen to the sorry level of neglect and misuse in which it languishes today. We are not only not as skilled in knife usage as our ancestors, but by and large, our knives aren't as efficient, either.

Social pressure and the repeating firearm made the fighting knife a second-class citizen. In the case of the Bowie, we had a knife that was so effective it insured its own banishment. It is a fact that by 1837, the state legislatures of Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee had all passed legislation that

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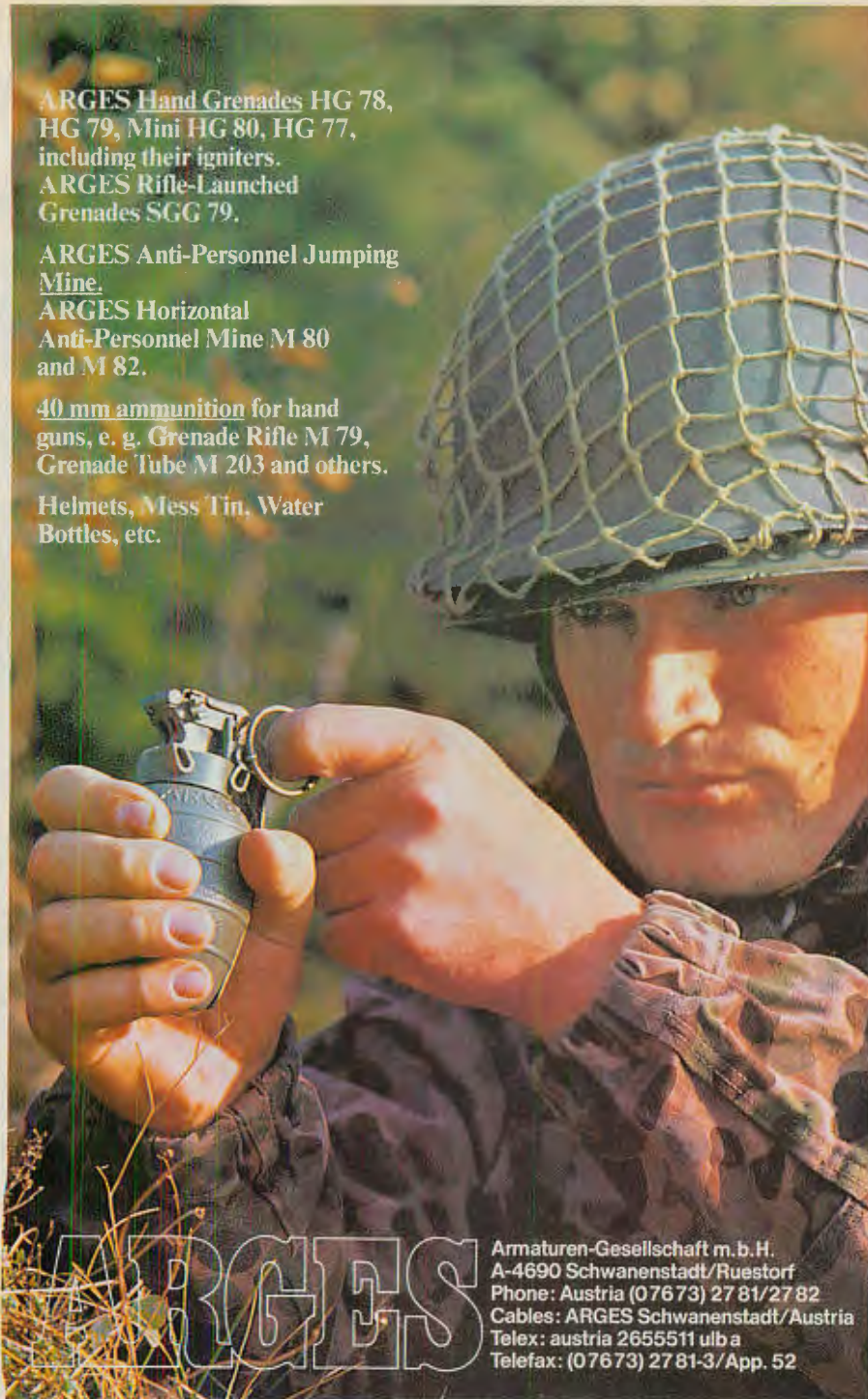
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made it a felony to kill a man *with a Bowie knife*. Not even the new and efficient Colt pistol was singled out for this ban. The gruesome result of an encounter with this knife left polite society somewhat squeamish, so the weapon declined into disfavor.

While the very nature of the Bowie knife is partly responsible for its demise, the environment which spawned the most effective tactics for its use was, paradoxically, unable to justify its existence. This is even more true today. In 1830 — and for hundreds of years before in Europe — gentlemen settled their disputes by duelling. The most common form taken by these duels was a fencing engagement. Fencing was and is a highly developed art and science devoted to the practice of allowing one man to cut another without getting cut himself.

Sound familiar?

Herein lies the final key to winning a knife fight. The principles of the European style of fencing are the best basis for allowing one man to cut another and escape unharmed. Unlike other practice and scoring systems, European fencing developed around the principle of first blood. That system developed out of the practical recognition that a badly-cut man could not continue to fight.

Certain advocates of some of the Oriental disciplines will dispute the superiority of European fencing. But I can only say that these people will be on the receiving end of a surprising education if they take on a fencing master, especially one armed with a Bowie knife.

So what are you going to do to improve your knife-fighting skills? Certainly you won't get good by duelling. You'd die before completing your apprenticeship.

Books are a good place to start. Sadly, good knife-fighting books are scarce; indeed, almost nonexistent. *Cold Steel* by Styers gives some basics, but you must separate some chaff to get to the wheat. If you are really serious about this sort of thing, go to your library and check out a couple of books on fencing technique.

And *practice*.

Better still, you can enroll in a fencing course at some health clubs and at some YMCAs. Just remember that fencing is a gentleman's game, and if you tell them that you want to learn to fence to help you with your knife fighting, they probably won't let you in the door. Whatever effort you have to expend to acquire skill in fencing will be weapons training well-spent.

Knife fighting isn't any different, in principle, from combat with firearms. It's just the right weapon, the right training, and practice, practice, practice. ✕

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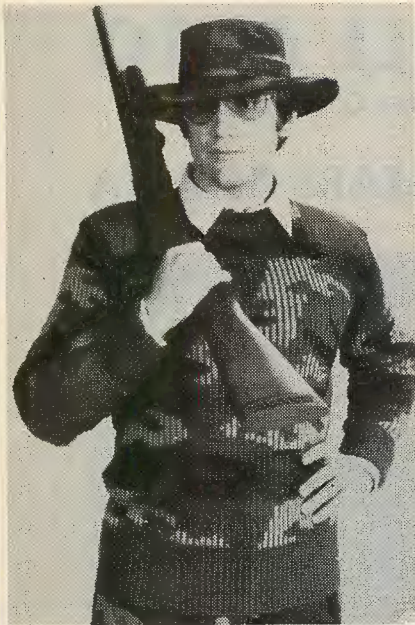
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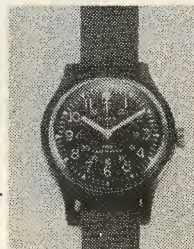


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AMERICAN Armed Forces have a new service pistol. Finally. The selection process was convoluted and overly long, but on 14 January 1985 the United States Army announced that the Beretta 92SB-F 9mm Parabellum pistol had been selected to replace the venerable — but tired — Colt M1911A1 .45 ACP pistol. That monumental decision was finally made as a result of something known as JSSAP.

The Joint Service Small Arms Program (JSSAP) began in 1977. JSSAP directs and coordinates small-arms research and development for the U.S. military. Membership includes the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard (although the Coast Guard has no vote). Its goals are to promote commonality of requirements, reduce development costs and time, improve the acquisition system and achieve interoperability with NATO.

In addition to the Colt M1911A1, our armed services had inventoried two dozen makes, models and types of handguns. There were more than 100 national stock numbers for handgun ammunition. Lethality tests conducted almost two decades ago at Aberdeen Proving Ground (Edgewood Arsenal) demonstrated conclusively to all but a handful of gun writers and politicians that the modern 9mm Parabellum cartridge is every bit as lethal — even more so — than the .45 ACP. It also happens to be NATO standard.

The first JSSAP trials began in 1979 at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. Using the Colt M1911A1 and S&W M15 .38 Spl. revolver as control pistols, extensive tests were conducted on the S&W Model 459, Heckler & Koch P9S and VP-70, Beretta 92S-1, Colt SSP (Stainless Steel Pistol), Star M28 and two FN designs (See SOF, February '80). All the candidate pistols were double-action, ambidextrous-control, 9mm Parabellum semiautomatic types with a minimum magazine capacity of 13 rounds.

Beretta emerged as the clear winner (See SOF, June '82). The Colt SSP self-destructed during the tests, as well as the HK VP-70, with the others all falling somewhere between. Beretta's rapture proved premature because the Army — not about to adopt a weapon tested by the Air Force — announced new trials. These trials were held at Aberdeen Proving Ground and the performance criteria proved to be so far removed from reality that none of the contestant pistols met the required reliability specifications.

The matter drifted into limbo. After a great deal of foot-dragging — accompanied by teeth-grashing and wild recriminations on all sides — new test



FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

JSSAP JURY CLEARS BERETTA



The champ: Beretta wins the XM9 tests by a unanimous decision and the U.S. military has a new sidearm.

Ease of disassembly and mechanical simplicity helped Beretta win the JSSAP tests.



criteria were formulated. Seven entries (FN withdrew at the last moment) wound up at the starting gate for this final test sequence, dubbed the "XM9 Trials." Contestants were the Beretta 92SB-F (a modification of the 92SB which had evolved from the 92S-1 of the Eglin trials) the Walther P88, Steyr GB, Smith & Wesson Model 459M, SIG Sauer P226 (entered by Maremont Corp., Saco, Maine), Colt SSP, and the Heckler & Koch P7M13.

Thirty samples of each candidate

weapon were submitted. After JSSAP verified that each manufacturer had complied with the physical specifications, the reliability testing was conducted at Fort Dix, New Jersey. Environmental and accuracy tests took place at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. Hit-probability tests were scheduled at Fort Benning, Georgia. As the trials drew to a close in September 1984, rumors circulated that all had been eliminated except the SIG Sauer P226 and Beretta 92SB-F. SIGARMS, Inc. (commercial distributor of the SIG Sauer product line) went so far as to print brochures and posters for distribution at the recent SHOT Show in Atlanta, Georgia with an American flag stylistically imposed over the P226 and the slogan, "Pick a Winner!" emblazoned above. That was somewhat premature and the Beretta pistol once more walked off with the roses, this time for keeps.

The 92SB-F meets and exceeds all of the final U.S. Government specifications. The pistol operates by short recoil with a falling locking block driven downward to disengage the slide from the barrel and halt the barrel's rearward travel. The slide is cut away to reduce weight and eliminate ejection stoppages. The ambidextrous manual thumb safety disengages the trigger from the sear. Located on the slide, it's not quite as convenient to reach and operate as that of the Colt M1911A1. The firing pin is inertial and a spring-

Continued on page 99

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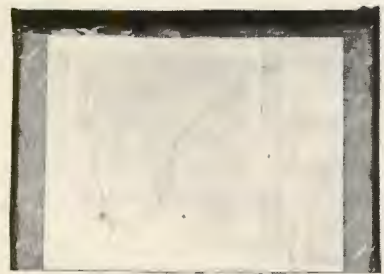


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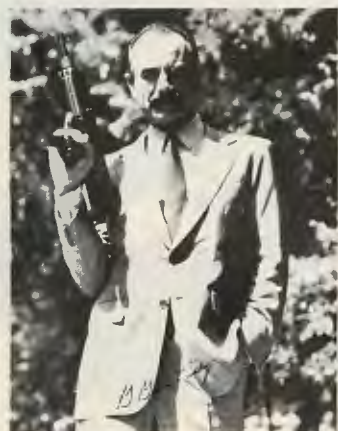


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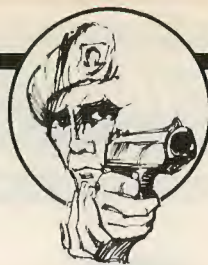
Karl F. Koenig was in Vietnam from 1969-1971 with 5th Special Forces Group. His "classified capacity" sent him over the fence on numerous occasions.

LIKE so many of the children of my generation, I had grown up nourished by the stirring answers to the question, "What did you do in the war, Daddy?" Many afternoons and evenings I spent in the darkness, watching John Wayne dealing out well deserved justice to innumerable fiendish little yellow devils in the air, on (or under) the sea, and, of course, stalking through the jungles shooting invisible snipers out of the trees every few paces.

Somehow I knew that was the way it should be. Of course an occasional GI or Marine had to go and get himself killed in order to inspire his buddies to death-defying acts or in order to sacrifice himself for the company.

But what a way to go! The war always stopped while your friends gathered around your shattered body and someone was always moved to make a speech which instantly restated the ideals "which made Our Country Great" or read your unfinished letter to your mother. Amenities finished, they then pressed on toward Final Victory.

Years later, I found myself one of the



I WAS THERE

HEROES AND HOLLYWOOD

by Carl F. Koenig



Photo: Courtesy of Warner Brothers

Righteous Defenders of the American Way of Life in a place called Vietnam. Heat, sweat, mud stench, paddies and jungle. Fatigue, hurry-up-and-wait, and hours of boredom interspersed with minutes of terror.

Air assault.

Crouched in the door of the chopper, teeth clanking from the vibration of the rotor and damn near deafened

from the door-gunner firing the M60 inches from my face. Acrid smoke from fires in the grass, marker grenades, gunships. I can't see a damn thing. Hands slick with sweat on the plastic weapon stock, mouth drier than I've ever felt.

The tall grass of the LZ whips crazily in the wild wash of the rotors. It's time.

I throw myself out of the door, miss my landing, and sprawl face-down in mud and rancid water. As I struggle to my feet, gasping, I'm knocked flat again by someone landing squarely across me. I curse him and strike out with elbow and gun butt.

He slides off of me and nearly drowns me, pouring hot liquid over the back of my head. Wiping my stinging and blinded eyes, my hand is covered with blood and jellied material I can't identify.

Almost a full minute passes before I realize what hit me. It was my squad leader, and his head was missing from the jawbone up. He had straightened up too fast . . . just as the door-gunner began sweeping fire over him. Two hits from the M60 disintegrated his head. First casualty — by friendly fire.

"This doesn't happen!" I screamed to myself.

Wiping the blood and brain bits from my eyes, I ran for the treeline, retching. We swept the area, found nothing. No one covered before our righteous justice, nor cheered us on to victory through garland-strewn streets.

Somehow, I don't remember that the war stopped while I made a speech over that headless body. I didn't. That was someone else's problem.

I was exhausted, confused, deafened, and scared — but I learned something! I'd wandered into the wrong movie. This never happened to John Wayne. ✕

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NIGRO UPDATE...

SOFer Anthony Nigro ("Contract in Borneo," SOF, February '85) says that if anybody needs help getting machines into the air against the bad guys, that they should contact him. Write Nigro in care of SOF.

He's no longer working for the Royal Brunei Malay Regiment, but is contracted to a private company. To date, he has 17 years of overseas work experience.

WRONG TARGET...

SOF erred in crediting Dave Arnold with the course of fire for the '84 Convention's Three Gun International Combat Match. The original course was designed by Bill Valput Sr. and Scott M. Warren of the Lewis Wetzel Practical Pistol League, 2004 Warwood Ave., Wheeling, WV 26003.

CALLING ALL DEALERS...

SOF wants to enlist the aid of SOF dealers in collecting field gear and medical supplies for the Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters and for the Salvadoran Army. Newsstands, gun shops, surplus stores and other SOF safes outlets that are willing to collect donations for SOF's Nicaraguan/Salvadoran Defense Fund can get full information by writing *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine, Special Projects Dept., P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.



SOF's John Donovan sets charges before blowing bridge. Photo: Courtesy of John Donovan



GAS-ENHANCED EXPLOSIONS...

SOF demo editor John Donovan knows why terrorist bombs have become so much more destructive in the last few years. They are often gas-enhanced explosions (GEE).

GEE devices can be built by relatively unsophisticated technicians and have been used recently by many terrorist groups, including the Baader-Meinhoff gang and Italy's Red Brigades. The eight blasts in Kuwait last year were probably GEE, but the destruction from such an explosion is so great that without corroborative evidence, they can easily be confused with a completely detonated charge of more conventional high explosive.

Known from the early days of mining explosives, these "slow-burning" reactions use available air to combine with flammable substances to destroy large areas, sometimes turning whole structures into bombs. Such fuel-air explosives were used militarily in World War II and in the Vietnam War as air-drop devices.

FALSE I.D....

Through a photo-caption mix-up on page 50 of the April SOF, Inspector General Villela of the FNLA was misidentified as Paulo, commander of the escort that walked SOF correspondent David Mills from the Zairean border into Angola. Follow Mills' trek to Luanda and his assessment of the chances of the resistance in Northern Angola, starting on page 53 of this issue.

POST FIGHTS MUJAHIDEEN...

On 13 January the Washington *Post* may have denied the Afghan Freedom Fighters any chance of acquiring effective anti-air weapons in the near future. With questionable motivation and certain damage, the *Post* publicized a U.S. government plan to give the mujahideen heavy air-defense weapons with which they might protect themselves and their villages from attacks by Soviet fixed-wing and rotary-wing combat aircraft.

Utterly devoid of such resources, the Afghan resistance has had no defense against Sukhois, MiGs, Mi-8s and the high-survivability Mi-24s used to attack guerrillas and civilians alike. The Afghans' only reasonable chance to turn back these indiscriminate assaults were the promised AA cannon (probably 40mm Oerlikons).

The *Post* has probably guaranteed that the mujahideen won't get them.

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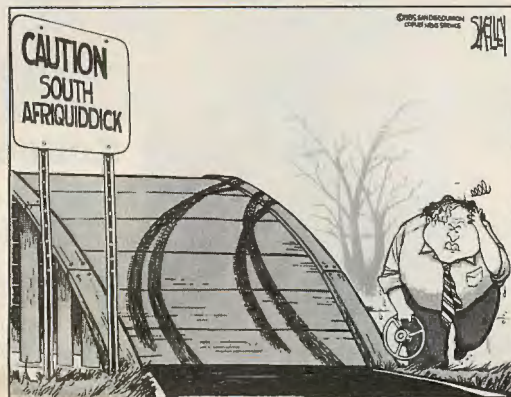
Peter Max got \$300,000 of U.S. tax revenues for seven paintings which included the original of this reproduction posted at a U.S.-Mexico border crossing. Photo: Charles G. Patterson

GET THEE TO A NUNNERY...

Front pages across the United States trumpeted that SOF had been exposed again in January of this year, when an American nun announced that she'd been detained at an FDN roadblock, and that the freedom fighters were wearing SOF Second Annual Convention shoulder patches.

Nancy Donovan belongs to the Maryknoll order, criticized by Pope John Paul II for their interference in politics and adherence to "liberation theology." She claims that she knew those "mercenaries" who stopped her were the same ones who had recently killed 14 "innocent civilians."

Of course, the only reason she could carry this lie to the press is because the freedom fighters released her, unharmed.



BAD SIGN...

Does Peter Max's psychedelic art mean America to you? Probably not, unless you were stoned throughout the late sixties. But Uncle Sam seems to have a different idea.

GSA contract GS-OOB-2098, issued 28 March 1975, specified that New York-based painter Peter Max would get \$300,000 for seven original paintings, to be reproduced to make a total of 200 laminated copies. The mellow, rainbow-colored, non-representative fantasies were distributed among government agencies, and a number were mounted as welcome signs at U.S. border crossings.

An official at a crossing between Arizona and Mexico suggested that one complaining tourist should "Carry the damn thing away. Nobody here will stop you."

Oh, well. It's only tax dollars.

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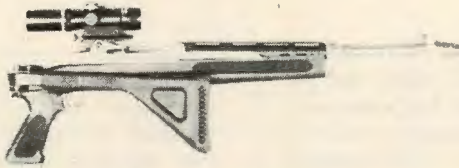


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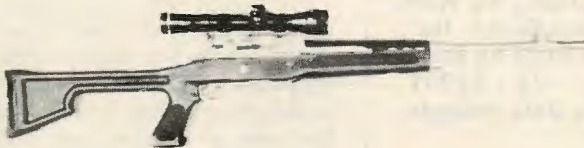
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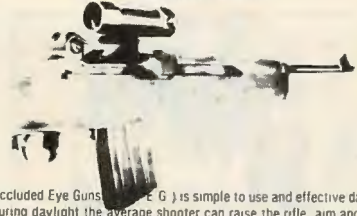
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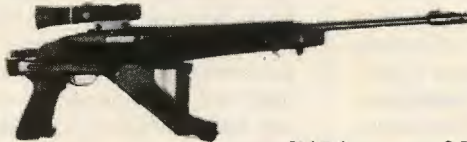
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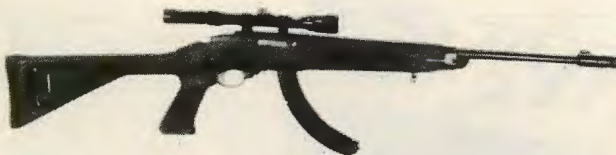
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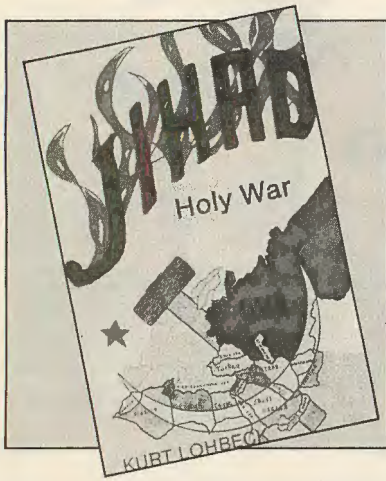
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JIHAD: HOLY WAR. By Kurt Lohbeck. MAYDAY Press, Dept. SOF, 205 3rd Street S.E., Washington D.C. 100 pp. \$3.00. Review by Brigham Schreiber.



Tell them what is happening here. Tell them we are not only fighting for our freedom, but we are fighting for their freedom. Do they care...? Mujahideen Freedom Fighter to author Kurt Lohbeck, 1984.

JIHAD is a strong volume which chronicles the Soviet war of aggression against the population of Afghanistan. Lohbeck's first work on the Afghan war is diminutive in the same way a cake of C-4 is compact. The author knows his stuff and pulls no punches in telling the story of the Afghan resistance the way he saw it.

Lohbeck walked into the war-torn nation to film and photograph, interview and accompany the Freedom Fighters. He stresses that what covert aid the U.S. Congress has earmarked for the Afghans has gone not to the Freedom Fighters directly, but rather to the nations where the refugees have fled to. That aid is not military and the Mujahideen still lack arms and a serious surface-to-air capability. The Freedom Fighters rely on a chance hit on the tail rotor of a Soviet chopper to bring it down, but the men on the ground are hopelessly out-gunned from above.

Picking up this book is a bit like hitting the switch on a det cord. There just ain't no putting it down. **Jihad** is impelling and evocative. The reader is drawn into the history of the nation without being subjected to a lecture and travels quickly to the important events of today.

Lohbeck, a broadcast journalist for 20 years, makes no bones about his

IN REVIEW



anti-communist stance. He reveals the shortcomings of U.S. policy and the determination of both the Soviets and the half dozen factions which make up the Freedom Fighters. Lohbeck is destined to become a celebrated conservative "newsie" and will probably be disliked by liberals who believe it is possible to negotiate with a Russian with a bayonet at your throat and a round in an AK chamber.

Jihad is the first of a series of works Lohbeck plans to write on Soviet aggression in Afghanistan and other hot spots around the world. The author also has worked with ABC's *Closeup* documentary unit on award-winning programs and he now heads an independent production TV company which has been contracted by NBC and CBS to cover wars in the Middle East.

WINGS. Photography by Mark Meyer. Thomasson-Grant, Inc., Dept. SOF, 2250-6 Old Ivy Road, Charlottesville, VA 22901. 144pp. Review by Dale Andrade.

IT may not be the most comprehensive or technical piece of work ever done on the U.S. Air Force, but it definitely gives a different perspective. *Wings* concentrates on something we often forget when poring over the cryptic spec sheets that crop up in the pages of the average book about flying and flyboys: the beauty of flying.

Photographic skill gives this book the quality of a work of art. You won't find a sourcebook of USAF capabilities here. Mark Meyer refers to his models for this work as "flying objects of art" but he has understated the real reason that this book is a winner. Browse the pages and the improbable grandeur of soaring between heaven and earth takes on new meaning. Meyer's photographic skills make this book, plain and simple.

For people who have never jockeyed a jet fighter or crewed a bomber, *Wings* becomes a vehicle for the imagination. Fighter formations, bomber squadrons and even refueling operations take on new meaning. They do indeed become flying objects of art.

But there's more to this book than just pretty pictures. Along with the photographs in *Wings* there are interviews with fighter pilots, bomber pilots, airlift pilots, tanker pilots and reconnaissance and special-systems pilots. These sky jockeys add their special perspective to each section.

For those who simply must have their fix of diagrams and figures, *Wings* has those too. In a section near the back, you can learn everything you ever wanted to know about airplane performance and specifications. But that's only a minor part of what *Wings* can add to anybody's perspective on military aircraft.

The famous test pilot, Chuck Yeager, seems impressed with this work — he wrote a lengthy and informative forward. You will be equally impressed. ✕



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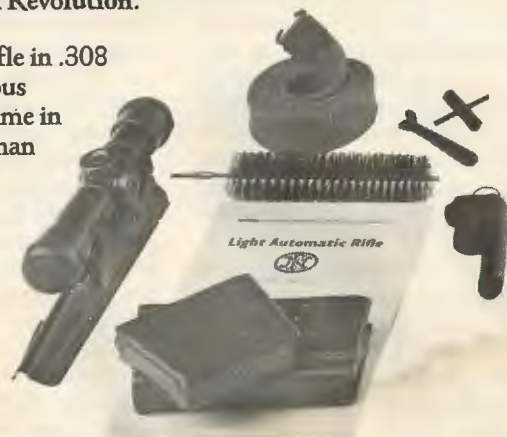
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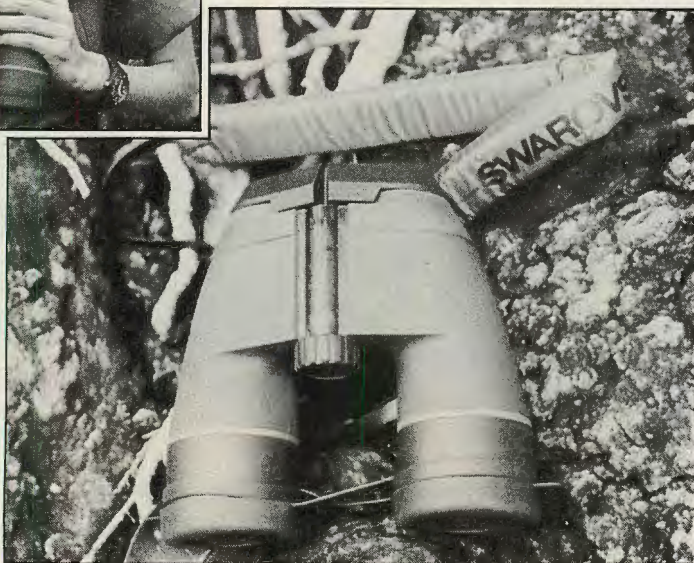


Glassing the G's

**Text and Photos
by Peter G. Kokalis**

Austrian Habichts help Atlacatl Bn. Second Lt. Ochoa scan Salvadoran bush.

Swarovski 10x50 binocs beat the Central American jungle.



UNLESS you happen to be conducting deep reconnaissance or directing supporting fire during combat, binoculars should either be kept in your pack or given to *someone you'd* like to see blown away so he can hang them around his neck. Nothing spots an officer or leader as quickly as a pair of issue field glasses dangling before his breastbone.

But it's a risk most military people have to face since magnified human vision and precise optics are crucial to command and control on the modern battlefield. Professional soldiers should care enough to carry the very best. That may require some shopping and testing.

The Austrian firm of Swarovski Optik KG is an internationally known leader in binocular technology. Founded in 1948 in Absam, a northern section of the old Tyrolean mining city of Hall, the Swarovski plant occupies the site of a former WWII German Army supply depot.

In 1979 Swarovski introduced the

Habicht (Hawk) SL 8x50 binoculars which featured a unique "inside-out" construction. I recently took a pair of the new Habicht SL 10x50 binoculars down to El Salvador for test and evaluation. The SL 10x50 was designed for those who need 10X-magnification, but are not willing to sacrifice the light gathering power of the 50mm objective lens. The glasses provide massive power and brilliance at only 2.3 pounds. The field of view at 1,000 meters is 101 meters (or 5.8 degrees).

The Salvadoran bush is as tough a tropical optical obstacle course as you will ever encounter. Humping in heavy rain, through literally steaming jungles, across swollen rivers, up and down endless hills, day and night, will quickly expose the flaws on any optical device. The Habicht SL's took the rough conditions of Central America in stride.

Swarovski manufactures all of its own optical components, maintaining the highest quality standards in the industry. Swar-

ovski SL binoculars are constructed from the "inside-out" by first fabricating the "core section" or prism block. Two mated prisms are laser aligned and sealed together. At the same time the ocular (eyepiece) and objective tubes are mounted to the prisms and sealed. The entire assembly is highly shock-resistant. By cementing the prisms together the possibility of internal reflections between the two prisms is eliminated. The complete optical system is designed around the special conical prisms to maximize the light gathering potential.

The result is a brighter and sharper image than obtained by the standard prism block.

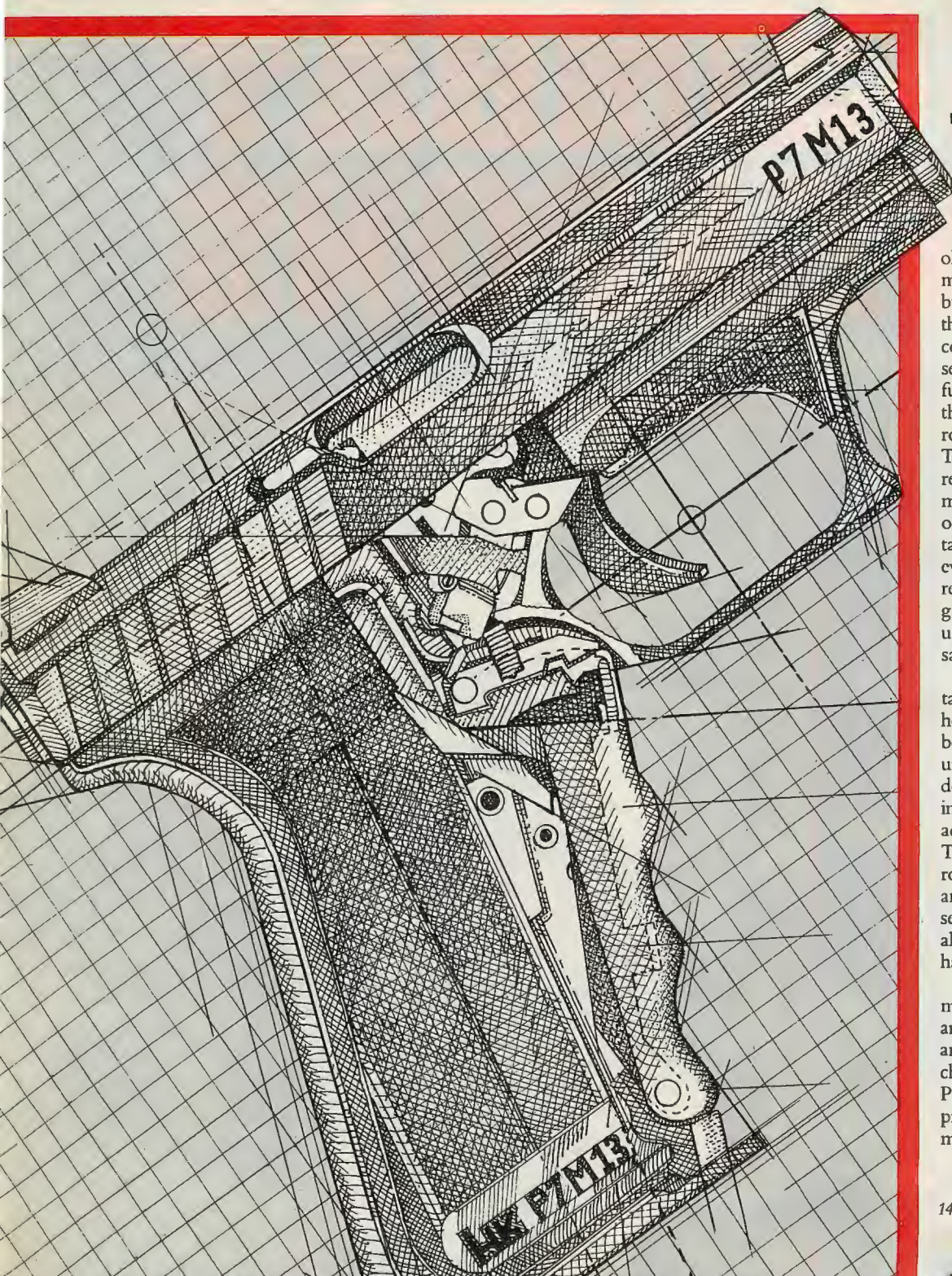
The hinge's central axis is aligned with the optical path and sealed to the core section. This entire unit is then injection molded with a highly elastic polyurethane-foam cover. This polyurethane material serves a number of useful purposes. Comfortable, durable, noiseless, non-reflective and corrosion resistant, it further protects the optical system against shock. Sweating hands will not slip on its surface and it can be washed with soap and water. Best of all are the two thumb grooves molded into the underside of the Swarovski SL binoculars — human engineering at its best. They offer an optimum grip for long scanning times — especially important with 10-power glasses.

Swarovski Habicht SL binoculars are the only waterproof, military grade binoculars I know of with a successful central focusing system. Somewhat like that of a zoom-power binocular, a butyl rubber bellows surrounds the ocular, sealing it onto the core section with o-rings. The focusing adjustment has no exposed "bridge," or crossbar. During final assembly the objective lens is mounted, laser aligned and sealed with silicone. The binoculars are tested at a depth of 15 feet of water for one hour.

The "Swarotop" super wideband coating transmits 99.8 percent of the light to hit any lens surface — highest performance in the industry. As a result the SL binoculars are four to five percent brighter than any others.

These binos were so good in the bush that I had a tough time getting them back from the Salvo infantry officers who helped me give them a work-out. Atlacatl Battalion officers were all ecstatic about the SL 10x50's power level, image crispness, comfort, ruggedness and water proofing. Target tracking at low light levels was outstanding. Most important, these are the first 10 power binoculars I have ever been able to use for long periods of time without the image jerking about like an unsecured machine gun.

Professional performance never comes cheap, but professionals never quibble about the price of their tools, especially in combat. The Habicht SL 10x50 binoculars carry a suggested retail price of \$610 in black or dark green, complete with the finest padded neck strap I've ever used. For further information contact Swarovski America Ltd. (Dept. SOF, 1 Kenney Drive, Cranston, Rhode Island 02920). ❧



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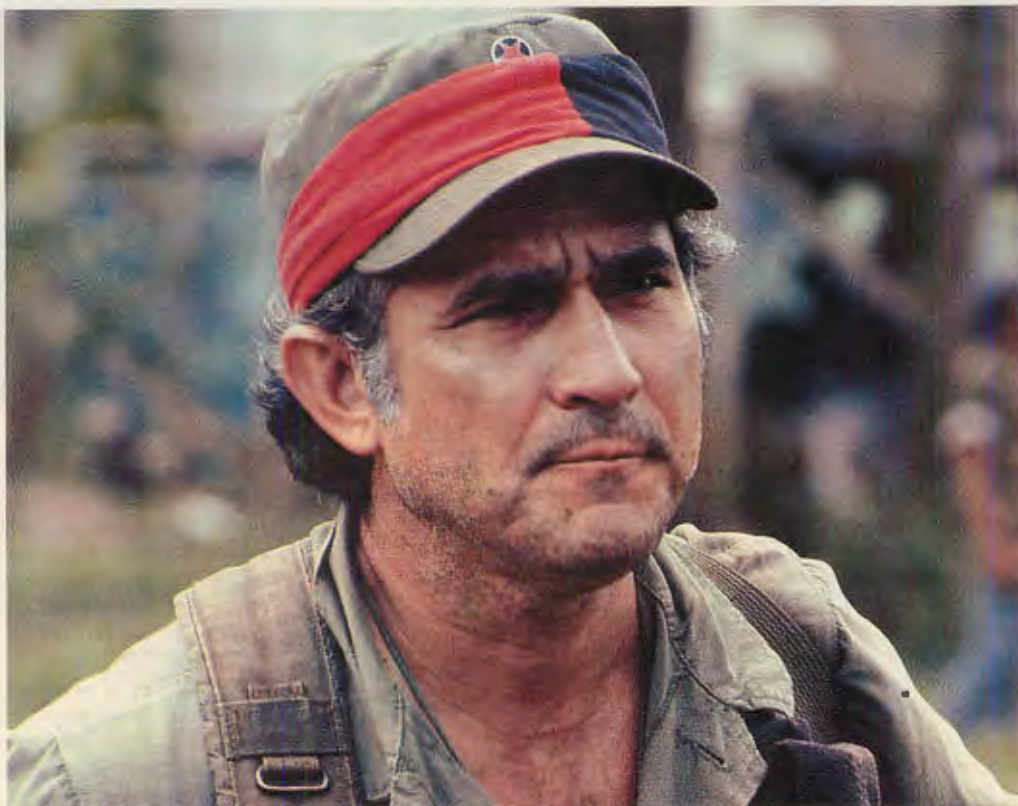
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Comandante Cero is still a fiery speaker, loved and admired by his followers. These days there are fewer followers, virtually no foreign support and military action is at a standstill.

INSIDE EDEN

Can Charisma Carry the Commandante?

by Steve Salisbury

Whatever happened to Eden Pastora?

Injured in an assassination attempt, expelled from the Revolutionary Democratic Alliance (ARDE), deprived of the press attention on which he thrives, and denied U.S. aid for his intransigent refusal to cooperate with more conservative elements of the Nicaraguan resistance, Comandante Cero has retreated to the Nicaraguan borderlands which were his haunts when he ran ARDE military ops.

How did he get there?

Claiming to be a founding member of the Sandino Revolutionary Front (F.R.S.), Pastora was certainly an early member of the Sandinista rebellion. He finally became famous as the man who led the men who seized the Palace in Managua in August of 1979. The title of Assistant Defense Minis-

ter was his reward from the junta. Eden Pastora's power trip had begun.

Why did Pastora turn?

On 10 July 1981, Pastora left Nicaragua. Barricada (the Sandinista official newspaper) announced that it was an international mission, suggesting revolutionary consequences. Pastora says he was sent to spend \$5 million in Libyan money to undermine democracy in Central America (in Eden Pastora: Una Vida en Busca de la Libertad, Publicaciones ARDE, no date).

This mission and his access to the most powerful Sandinistas showed him the development of revolution in the New World, and the part of Cuba, the Soviet Union and the new Nicaraguan government in the spread of "wars of national liberation." According to Pastora, he parted ways with

the Sandinistas because he had discovered they were communists.

Pastora's detractors say he deserted because he wasn't appointed Minister of Defense in the Sandinista government.

Following an interlude in Cuba — where Pastora says he occupied his time by going to "plays, museums and zoos, ate good food, and lived in a fine house with a black Mercedes-Benz at the door" — he wound up in Costa Rica where another power struggle was taking place. Pastora joined ARDE and used his former position as a soldier to compete for leadership of the southern front. Two other influential anti-Sandinistas — Alfonso Robelo and Brooklyn Rivera — took Pastora's side against the other contender ARDE leadership, Fernando Chamorro. Eden Pastora became military commander



of the Revolutionary Democratic Alliance.

Although Comandante Cero had become numero uno in the southern Nicaraguan resistance, he didn't stop squabbling with the competition. After Chamorro was aced-out, he left ARDE, charging Pastora with harboring an assassin who shot and wounded Chamorro's son. And that wasn't the only time Pastora's name was linked with violence among competing resistance groups in Costa Rica.

Casually dressed, bearded and charismatic around anyone with a camera or a tape recorder, Pastora was the conspicuous favorite of Central American reporters. Newsmen who assumed the other anti-Sandinista movement — the FDN — was composed of Somocistas in different uniforms could identify with a man who left the Sandinistas because they had betrayed the revolution. Edén Pastora emerged as a media darling of the Nicaraguan resistance.

Meanwhile, *SOF* had heard of tales of U.S. citizens in ARDE. When one came forward in the summer of 1984, we bought his exclusive story. Dr. John had served in the U.S. Army, the Marines, a Surinamese counterrevolutionary group and had been chief of recon and intel for Pastora.

Dr. John told us a story of attacks on civilians, poor organization, military incompetence and tales and threats of vengeance against other resistance groups that hardly resembled the Comandante Cero of the press releases. Yet Dr. John had dates, photos, dogtags and corroborative witnesses for his story. We had no choice but to print it ("An American in ARDE," *SOF*, November '84).

SOF correspondent Steve Salisbury has been shot at with the Sandinistas and ARDE. He speaks Spanish like a campesino and has earned his rep as a uniquely qualified combat reporter for this complicated war. Since Salisbury has maintained a personal relationship with Pastora — despite *SOF's* opinion of the Comandante's inadequate role in the resistance — we assigned him to find Pastora, learn what had happened since his fall from military command of ARDE and file a report.

Pastora surged into the interview with a

The old ARDE had guns, ammo, uniforms, morale and out-of-country organization, although critics charged that ARDE leadership — especially Pastora — talked much and fought little.



Contact may have been rare, but Pastora's troops once roamed the jungle trails of southern Nicaragua.



Pastora's troops, young and old, fill empty hours with work about camp.

vitriolic response to Dr. John's charges as published in *SOF*. Pastora dismissed the story, saying that Dr. John's pistol and camera had been stolen during service with ARDE and the charges made by his former staff officer were nothing more than sour grapes. He had no specific rebuttal.

But Salisbury stayed to hear Edén Pastora's account of what he is doing to drive the Sandinistas from Nicaragua.

A chilly rain had just about stopped when we docked our boat on the Nicaraguan side of the San Juan river. It didn't matter much. We were already soaked. I was hoping for a warm welcome — literally and figuratively — from the charismatic guerrilla leader Edén Pastora.

During his heyday, the former Sandinista had captured more headlines and enchanted more journalists than any other Nicaraguan leader. Pastora has fought a roller-coaster war against the Cuban-supported Nicaraguan government, and rear-guard political actions against his confederates in ARDE (Democratic Revolutionary Alliance). By far the most controversial of Nicaraguan resistance leaders, Pastora symbolized the battle against the Sandinistas for many Nicaraguan *campesinos* and for much of the world. That was before his adamant refusal to ally his troops with other anti-Sandinista forces to form a united front resulted in his dismissal from ARDE. Pastora was no longer in the limelight and I wondered how the fall from his favorite perch would affect this dynamic man.

Since Pastora's ouster, few reporters have followed him to the ground he still occupies with the remnants of his once-powerful guerrilla band. I had come to his Nicaraguan headquarters to hear how things had changed.

Tito Chamorro, Edén Pastora's operations coordinator (no relation to Fernando Chamorro), was the first out of the boat. I followed him, leading two *norteamericano* journalists. We carefully climbed cracked, slimy wooden stairs up a mud bank and walked to a shack built on stilts. A dozen guerrillas played cards or cleaned AKs in the space underneath. Maybe twice as many

were in their tents scattered about the jungle clearing. The air was thick with humidity — and frustration.

Most of Pastora's remaining rebels were young. Some wore camouflage and some tattered civilian clothing. Few had military footwear and those who sported tattered American jungle boots obviously needed replacements. Vacant stares attested to the boredom that hung over the camp like badly needed mosquito netting.

Many looked malnourished and sick. Dysentery haunts these jungles and the smell of shit permeated Pastora's camp. Young soldiers lay about in the same hopeless squalor I had seen a year ago in freedom-fighter encampments just upriver.

ARDE is the name that has meant resistance to Sandinista Marxism in Southern Nicaragua. But the glow had obviously tarnished on this symbol. For Eden Pastora, it had been a tough year.

In February of 1984 a Sandinista offensive smashed through several ARDE bases along the San Juan River — the border with Costa Rica — and drove hundreds of guerrillas into Costa Rican territory (see "Contra Crisis," SOF, July '84). Two weeks later the freedom fighters reoccupied their destroyed encampments . . . after the Sandinistas abandoned them.

ARDE's single item of good news for 1984 made headlines in April. The guerrillas stormed and took the tiny Caribbean port of San Juan del Norte. They held the town for several days and Pastora was on top of the heap.

Then a fateful press conference nearly beheaded ARDE. Pastora's penchant for publicity nearly cost him his life.

On 30 May 1984, someone impersonating a journalist planted a bomb at a press conference at Pastora's jungle headquarters, La Penca, in southern Nicaragua. The bomb exploded and several journalists and guerrillas were killed or injured. Pastora was severely wounded and evacuated to Costa Rica.

While *Comandante Cero* was recovering in Venezuela from surgery to repair damage from burns, the Sandinistas launched a rainy-season offensive. Fighting was brutal and casualties were high on both sides. Once again ARDE's river encampments were destroyed. Pride and prestige suffered, but materiel losses were clearly the most significant result of the Sandinista offensive. The U.S. government had already slowed aid to *Comandante Cero*'s forces to a trickle — if not stopped it completely — because of Pastora's refusal to cooperate with the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), the more conservative northern coalition. Losses in war material would not be covered by Uncle Sam.

In July, a faction of ARDE led by Alfonso Robelo — whom Pastora labels a former-Sandinista politico (apparently forgetting his own role in the Sandinista government) — called for ARDE's representative assembly to vote for an alliance with the FDN and expel the unyielding Pastora. Robelo won the battle but many of ARDE's combatants

stayed with their charismatic *Comandante*.

Robelo enlisted Fernando "El Negro" Chamorro (whom Pastora characterizes as "the commander of a minor anti-Sandinista movement," despite Chamorro's original competition with Pastora for command of ARDE forces) to build a new ARDE army with the modest support the United States was giving him. The U.S. Congress cut off funds to the Nicaraguan resistance in May but the CIA continued to give the freedom fighters supplies bought from funds appropriated before the suspension of aid. It was too little and too late.

ARDE had fallen into such disarray that there was little chance for their military recovery in the near future. Reorganization efforts were seemingly futile. Pastora charges that Robelo never recruited more than a few-dozen men. He says the effort to reorganize ARDE has failed completely and that most recruits have turned to banditry in Costa Rica. (SOF's most recent expedition to Nicaraguan camps of the reformed ARDE provided no evidence to support such charges. We found about 100 armed and well-organized guerrillas — Robelo only claims 120 — actively engaged in small-scale operations against Sandinista forces.)

Pastora says some 7,000 guerrillas languish in the jungle — sick, ill-clothed and hungry.

Before Pastora's ouster, ARDE effectiveness in the war against the Marxist Nicaraguan government was questioned, but at least the southern front was united. It's not that way today. The Democratic Revolutionary Alliance is now a name claimed by several bickering factions. And the cut-off of American aid is felt acutely by all of them.

Military activity has been drastically reduced. Pastora says some 7,000 guerrillas languish in the jungle — sick, ill-clothed and hungry. (The figure comes from Pastora. Intelligence-service and educated private estimates put ARDE strength well below that count.) All that background information ran through my mind as I approached Pastora's jungle camp.

On 13 January 1985, I finally reunited with Eden Pastora inside Nicaragua.

Freedom fighters remembered me and we embraced each other. I asked them how it was going. They told me things were "fine." It didn't look that way.

Despite rueful — almost resentful — expressions, everything was not gloom and doom at Pastora's camp. When the sun came out the guerrillas went to work digging latrines and trenches, tending crops. Their spirits seemed to lift with the change in weather. A volunteer civil engineer was guiding their efforts.

"It's good that the boys keep active,"

said the young bearded Frenchman who came to Pastora's encampments seven weeks ago. "I try to use my knowledge to help them. It's my way of fighting communism. There's terrible disinformation in Europe. They don't know how these people suffer." The insurgents briefly stopped working when Commander Zero swaggered into the encampment with his escort.

Pastora's hold on those remaining soldiers was evident as they silently gathered around him. Pastora slung his M16 over his shoulder and walked over to me. He put his arm around my waist, smiled and shook my hand.

He's a real charmer.

"It's been a long time since I saw you last," he said. "You look good." Pastora looked like he was in good shape also. He was well turned-out in neat, olive-green fatigues. He was robust and I saw no scars to mark his brush with death in the press-conference bombing.

"How are things going, *Comandante*?" I asked.

"Very bad." Pastora didn't mince words. "The American State Department is doing everything wrong . . . but let's talk a little later." The *Comandante* huddled with his general staff in the clearing. I started taking photos.

Pastora was almost killed by a bomb planted in camera equipment. But the shutter's click caused no reaction. He had been photographed thousands of times and turned his head to give me good angles. Fifteen minutes later he called me and the other two journalists over to his side.

"I am very worried," said the unshaven *Comandante*. "The American government is going to sell out liberty in Nicaragua to buy peace in El Salvador. It only wants to use our forces to get concessions from Managua.

"The American State Department and the [Nicaraguan] communists are now negotiating to cut a deal where the United States stops us in return for the communists stopping the Salvadoran guerrillas. The United States is the greatest democracy and superpower in the world. But American policy isn't interested if there's democracy or no democracy in Nicaragua. It doesn't care about our people's suffering. What it's interested in is that Nicaragua isn't a threat to American national security. As long as Nicaragua promises not to have nuclear missiles or subvert El Salvador, the United States is happy. It accepts communism in Nicaragua.

"The American people are intelligent, but American policy in Central America is stupid. I know the communists. They never honor their word. The United States should know this from Yalta and Vietnam. Nicaragua will always threaten Central America and the United States as long as the communists are in power."

Pastora paused for breath and shook his head.

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OPERATION "SLYFOX"

SF Secret Training Mission in Jordan

by Kurt Buffenbarger

LONG before the PLO spread panic through the area, before Israeli Defense Forces thrust north in an effort to effect a final solution to the Palestinian problem, and before the U.S. Marines were landed to direct traffic in the turbulent streets of Beirut, American planners knew there was potential for strategic disaster in the Middle East. Any number of radical sheiks with too many petro-dollars and not enough political savvy could threaten the flow of oil to U.S. industry. The Soviets were gaining significant strongholds in a number of countries including Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

By early 1982 the balance of power and influence in the Middle East was tilting precariously away from the West and it was clearly time for Uncle Sam to pat a few neglected nephews on the head as well as make some moves to bring new ones into the family. While diplomats shuttled funds and favors into the region, military minds were wrestling with a contingency plan in case someone struck a match before the situation could be defused. The best bet seemed to be linking up with Jordan's King Hussein to form a joint American-Jordanian Rapid Reaction Force that would be permanently based in the Middle East as a sort of hammer to nail troublemakers before they could have any effect on stability or the flow of vital oil.

The plan won tacit approval from the Reagan Administration and top-secret negotiations were opened with Jordanian military authorities. They were willing but acutely aware of deficiencies in their combat strength and capabilities. Through guarded channels the Jordanians asked for a low-key visit from some experienced, professional American soldiers who could observe their operations, spot weaknesses and suggest improvements.

Someone in the Pentagon broke out the roles-and-missions book and discovered the



Mission accomplished: U.S. and Jordanian troops hike to the rendezvous point where trucks will take them back to Amman.

GREEN BERET IN THE MIDEAST

Kurt Buffenbarger joined the Special Forces in 1978 and did a four-year stint. His primary MOS was small arms with a secondary in demolitions. Traveling to the Middle East with an SF A Team, Buffenbarger helped train Jordanian troops there. After leaving the service, he decided that his story could stand next to the best in SOF. He was right. This is his story.

task was right in the Special Forces' ballpark. A call went out to 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, N.C. and "Operation Slyfox" was underway. As an A-Team member I didn't have all the high-level background back then, but it wasn't hard to discern that something sneaky was in the wind.

In fact, it was fairly easy to see the mission coming down despite the ultra-tight security. No official word had been passed but my whole team knew that a delicate operation was in the works. Our team sergeant, a veteran of 15 years in Special Forces, had just returned with several SF officers from an "official business" trip to the Middle East. That might have satisfied the civilians but we knew Green Berets had no business in that area — official or otherwise — unless the brass intended to insert us for some reason. The facts filtered down slowly. The visit had been to establish contact with military authorities in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and work out details for Operation Slyfox. We would launch in A-Team strength and serve in observer/adviser roles. Since the proposed joint Rapid Reaction Force would involve Jordan's best troops, we would concentrate on them.

Under a blanket of security as tight as one can be drawn at Ft. Bragg, we were told that we would work with the 101st Jordanian Special Forces in combat medicine, physical fitness, small-unit tactics, border-stability ops, man-tracking, immediate-reaction drills, anti-armor tactics and clandestine airborne operations. We were about to enter Green Beret heaven.

We got a go for the mission and discovered we had only eight short weeks to cram for Operation Slyfox. We were force-fed lessons on Jordanian culture and customs as well as the particulars of our individual assignments. Since I was the team's light-



weapons specialist, the classes on man-tracking techniques, desert maneuvers and small-arms instruction were to be my responsibilities. My research indicated the Jordanians were equipped with American arms and munitions. That would make the weapons training easier.

A command brief-back rounded out stage one of the mission. Group and government officials approved of our plans and preparations. They gave us a final *go* and we packed up to leave Bragg. According to SOP for this type of mission, each team member was thoroughly briefed on escape and evacuation plans in case we had to un-ass the area in a hurry. We would be the first organized American military unit in the country and there was no telling what might happen if we made a mistake or the Jordanians changed their minds about our assistance. It was a sobering possibility. Leaving any mission through the back door is not the healthiest way to travel.

To maintain our low operation profile, an Air Force C-141B was turned up and trundled out to a remote loading site at Pope Air Force Base at 0100 hours on the day of our departure. Our equipment had already been loaded and the flight crew wasted no time getting airborne. Most of us slept through the flight to the Middle East but we hit turbulence over Saudi Arabia.

Our aircrew indicated the Saudi government had refused us permission to continue in their airspace. We had to divert to Sigonella Naval Air Station on Sicily where we waited the 24 hours it took the State Department to clear up the hassle. We got our first taste of the testy nature of Middle Eastern politics.

We flew on the next morning, presuming the diplomats had settled their differences over tea in someone's embassy. Our arrival in the Jordanian capital city of Amman was timed so we would hit the runway in the dark. We taxied to a remote part of the airport and off-loaded hot. The aircrew was

American SF team poses with its counterpart before heading out on the operation.

in an unusual hurry to get out of there. A cluster of Jordanian troops greeted us and helped load our equipment onto trucks. Loaded last was our portable diesel-powered generator that would provide the electricity required for our communication gear. It would be vital to keep the comm link open back to the States for intelligence updates.

After a short shuttle ride, we rolled into the garrison of the 101st Jordanian Special Forces which sits about a mile from the palace of King Hussein. Our hosts assigned us billets and we went to sleep determined to make the mission work no matter what we found ourselves facing in the morning. Fortunately, the Jordanians turned out to have the same sort of motivation.

Strong rapport between soldiers of two nations is indispensable in an operation like Slyfox. We began establishing it right away. Each Green Beret was assigned a Jordanian counterpart and began to cement a personal bond with the man. Later in the mission, it gave us much greater insight into the strengths and weaknesses of each host team member. It also quickly broke the cultural barrier and let us get down to the nuts and bolts of our mission.

Slyfox was split into two phases. First would be an evaluation period including classes designed to build up weak areas. Following that would be a field exercise to test the Jordanians' effectiveness in a hostile environment. Each day of training began with a two-hour PT session designed to build the stamina of the diminutive Jordanians.

We had to back off a bit on our early enthusiasm. No physical activity was allowed until after the morning call to prayer. Six times a day the mostly Sunni Moslem Jordanian troops stopped whatever

they were doing to pray. It was a minor inconvenience but we all wondered privately what would happen if the Jordanians tangled with an infidel force that decided to attack in force during prayers.

After a breakfast of goat's-milk cheese, boiled eggs and bread, the classes began. We had some trouble at first concentrating on the initial lecture portion of the day's instruction. Those of us who had not been shot at for a while stared uncomfortably at the scars on the classroom walls left by heavy machine-gun fire and strafing during the last of the periodic set-tos in this area. It was better outside during practical application when we worked on small-unit tactics. The Jordanians proved to be motivated soldiers and quick studies. That was fortunate since they had a lot to learn.

For my benefit as the visiting fireman, they demonstrated their standard ambush and assault tactics using blank ammo and BFAs on their M16s. I nodded and smiled but it was clear we had some work to do. Poor use of cover and concealment along the river rushes that dotted the training area seemed to be the biggest problem. They didn't seem to appreciate the terrain and what it could do for them in a fire fight. I got my team together and we demonstrated the Australian Peel Back method of breaking enemy contact. The Jordanian SF troopers seemed to understand and quickly picked up on it. They were obviously suffering from a lack of exposure to professional training. We decided to fix that in a hurry.

To be sure they were completely competent in carrying out the tactics we demonstrated and had them run, we decided to add the incentive of live ammo. The Jordanians never even batted an eye at the suggestion. It turned out they frequently use live ammo when running tactical drills. Not many American units are so confident. We were faced with the age-old problem of face.

Before turning the troops loose we decided that the American advisers would run through Australian Peel Back, near ambush, and bounding overwatch *with* the live ammo while our hosts watched. Next we split up and ran through each drill with half-American and half-Jordanian personnel. Then came the moment of truth. The Jordanians did the drills alone while we watched and evaluated. They *pulled it off* quite handily and our medic breathed a sigh of relief.

We moved from contact-oriented training to clandestine infiltration, an important subject in this area of disputed borders. Since most of the American advisers in Jordan were HALO (High Altitude Low Opening) jump qualified, everyone felt at home when it came to airborne operations. The Jordanians were not so gung-ho about putting their knees in the breeze. It just wasn't a big thing with them. I even found one 13-year veteran who had only 12 jumps — none at night.

Airborne training was going to be a tough nut to crack for other, less obvious reasons. The root of our woes was the Royal Jorda-

nian Air Force. They couldn't provide the aircraft needed for proficiency jumps. The problem had been recognized by the advance party months before and with a little help from the U.S. State Department, spare parts and fuel had made their way to Jordan so that the aging fleet of C-130s could stay airborne often enough to handle training missions as well as operational flights.

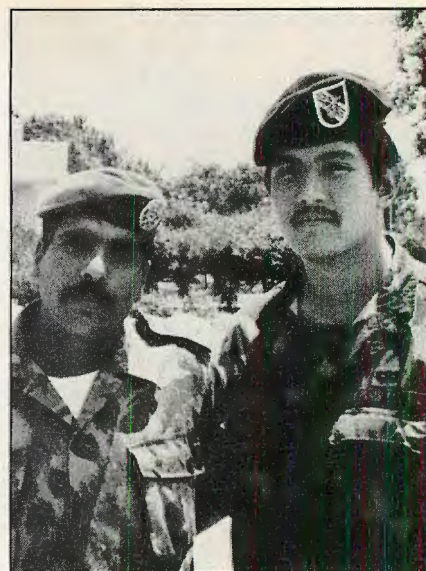
Inspecting these old birds was like a lesson in contemporary Middle Eastern military history. Most had flown in the Six Day War of 1967. Most had been hit a number of times and been repaired like someone's favorite old quilt. They were a jumpmaster's nightmare. Frayed anchor cables, broken lights and sharp metal edges on practically all surfaces were obvious in every aircraft. We installed replacement parts and miles of duct tape until they were all serviceable as jump platforms. Standing back to inspect our work, we decided on an added safety measure.

All jumps from these aged birds would be ramp exits. This was new to the Jordanians who had only learned to exit the troop doors on the sides of the aircraft. Their faces fell

discernibly at the announcement. They seemed to think leaving from the ramp meant certain death. But seeing is believing and we were more than happy to show them how safe it was.

The Jordanians use the same static-line parachute as the Americans — the MC1-1B. After several practice PLFs, I gave a quick jump briefing, inspected all the jumpers and herded them toward the aircraft. We alternated Americans and Jordanians in each stick. The word had been passed. Any shy Jordanians that froze on the ramp would be reassured by a friendly American boot in the behind.

It wasn't necessary. All the Jordanian SF troopers got out in good shape on the first day and the unit suffered only one jump-related injury. Unfortunately for me, the injured trooper happened to be my counterpart. He bored into the desert DZ without so much as a passing attempt at a PLF and promptly broke his leg. Fortunately for the status quo, an American adviser in our back-up team succeeded in breaking his leg during a low-level jump with full equipment the next day.



A member of the 5th SF Group makes a new friend. Many of the Green Berets kept in touch with their Jordanian counterparts after they returned to Ft. Bragg.

JORDAN'S MILITARY HERITAGE

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is in a peculiar position. It shares a longer border with Israel than any other Arab country and so must strive for peaceful relations with the Jews. But at the same time, the ruling monarch, King Hussein, has no desire to leave the Arab fold — Anwar Sadat of Egypt paid with his life for doing just that.

Jordan was arbitrarily created from the British protectorate of Transjordan by the stroke of an Englishman's pen in 1946. Surviving the UN Middle-East partition almost intact, Jordan was plagued by internal problems from the beginning. The population of the East Bank of Jordan is made up mostly of Palestinian refugees from the Israeli conquests of 1948 and 1967, and they have become politically agitated since the PLO stepped up action against the Israelis. But war put all those problems on the back burner.

The Jordanian Armed Forces have participated at full strength in two wars against Israel. In 1948, they proved to be the most effective of the Arab armies, securing the West Bank and East Jerusalem to the Hashemite throne. In the Six-Day War of 1967 they had little warning of hostilities and were forced to fight without air cover after their Air Force was destroyed on the ground in the first hours of the war. It's hard to turn in a credible performance with no air support, and the army was driven back across the Jordan River with heavy casualties.

A staggering defeat does not add to the credibility of an army, but the Jorda-

nians still kept their reputation as fighters intact. Their forlorn defense of the Old City area of Jerusalem — where Israeli air power could not be brought to bear — cost Israel almost half of its casualties in the entire war.

Despite their untarnished reputation, Jordan had serious problems after the inferno of the 1967 war. Jordan's Army was exhausted and in a shambles. The power of the Palestinian guerrilla organizations had reached its zenith and King Hussein was forced to make concessions to them in order to keep the peace. In the meantime, he was quickly reorganizing his tattered army with the help of both American and Arab aid. By September 1970 he was able to challenge the power of the Palestinians openly.

Civil war tore Jordan apart in 1970. Syria sent some armor south to intervene on the Palestinians' behalf. But the Army's loyalty held and the king won. All the Palestinian guerrillas were expelled from the country and their organizations banned.

The call to war came again in 1973. A Jordanian armored brigade was sent north to help the Syrians defend the Golan Heights in the 10th day of the war. Driving north from Jasim toward Kuneitra with the intention of cutting the Israeli advance, the tanks were left with unprotected flanks when the Syrians and Iraqis proved unable to deliver promised support. Twenty-two of the 80 Centurion tanks went up in flames when the Jordanian column was outflanked by the Israelis outside al-Harra. But once again, the Jordanian Army kept a reputation as a well-led and highly professional force.

Against this backdrop of domestic and

area instability, the Jordanian military has had to remain stable in the face of Israel's overwhelming superiority. King Hussein has managed to stay clear of the shrill Arab rantings against Jews and yet remain one of the outspoken opponents of the Israeli occupation of Arab lands.

Since 1983, the harsh realities of Arab oil politics have forced Hussein to seek a tentative peace with Israel. Jordan is a conservative monarchy and Hussein has to straddle the fence if he intends to keep his throne. No Arab conservative dares forget what happened to Sadat. There's a good possibility that some radical Islamic fundamentalist will try the same stunt if Hussein becomes too conciliatory.

Jordan's constitution states that "The King is the Supreme Commander of the Army, Naval and Air Forces." In rough terms, that corresponds with the President of the United States' title of "commander-in-chief." He can conclude peace treaties and declare war or martial law. In that respect, he oversteps the U.S. president's powers.

The Jordanian Army is a mirror of the British military system. As in the British Army, individual units have a strong identity. The Army consists of two armored divisions, two mechanized divisions, three special-forces battalions, four anti-aircraft brigades and at least 20 battalions of artillery. Divisions are triangular in form: each one has three brigades, each brigade has three battalions, and so on. Jordanian divisions are smaller than their U.S. equivalents because they do not include so much logistical and administrative support. Higher-echelon logistic functions are carried out by central-base facilities and specialized units which serve more than one division.

The jumps rounded out Phase I training in Operation Slyfox. It was time for Part II: deployment in the field. We coordinated with some senior officers in the Jordanian military and devised a scenario that would adequately test the Jordanians' grasp of what we'd taught them. It was a ticklish situation and about as far from hiking in the North Carolina woods for field ops as you could get.

We didn't have to study the geography books to realize the Jordanians share a border with Israel. A Jordanian combat unit operating close to the border might create some paranoia on the other side and prompt a pre-emptory strike. Since we would be accompanying the Jordanians, there was potential for an American Green Beret to be wounded or killed in a shoot-out. To further complicate matters, other 5th Group SF troopers were working with IDF troops while we were in Jordan.

We realized that while our instruction was primarily designed to help the Jordanians fulfill their proposed role in the Rapid Deployment Force, it would also be of great value to them if they decided to tangle with

the Israelis on the West Bank. Our training schedule had the op listed as "border-stability operations." It would have been more appropriately titled *instability* operations. But Washington had decided to take the risk. Who were we to question that wisdom?

A relatively quiet region near the north end of Jordan's border with the West Bank was chosen as the exercise area. It had been some time since any real skirmishes had occurred there but it was still under Israeli aerial reconnaissance. The Jordanian troops were anxious to get to the region and use their new tactics and training. We would tag along and give them tactical advice, coordinate secure communications and evaluate how well the Jordanians performed — unless the defecation hit the oscillation. In that case, no one had any good ideas about what we would do.

For the mission to the West Bank we created difficult training objectives to be accomplished. They were typical for Special Forces — establish a guerrilla support group in the region and train the guerrillas to an acceptable level of combat readi-

ness. Decision-making was up to the Jordanian SF team commanders. We would step in only if what they wanted to do would get someone killed.

Regular Jordanian Army troops, masquerading as guerrillas, were brought into the area by truck. It was up to the imaginations of our Jordanian counterparts to coordinate just how they were to supply, move and lead these guerrillas. The only help we gave was to supply an operations order that listed several sites in the region where they had to conduct various staged raids, ambushes and recons. Other regular Jordanian troops were assigned the role of aggressors and ordered to defend or aggressively patrol in our operational areas. I couldn't help thinking that the whole lash-up made for a lot of apparently threatening troop formations in the disputed border area. I hoped the hotlines were open between Amman and Tel Aviv.

The Jordanians diligently mapped out all the routes and base-camp areas. To assist them in planning, we let them use several of

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Special forces, as in the U.S. Army, are outside the divisional organization.

Until 1976, recruitment was entirely by voluntary enlistment with a strong preference being given to recruits of Bedouin tribal background from central and south Jordan. With a predominantly young and male population, there is no shortage of military manpower.

But there is a shortage of qualified personnel in technical fields. Jordan passed a law effective 1 January 1976 requiring all Jordanian males between the ages of 19 and 40 to serve in the armed forces for a period of two years. The law is only selectively practiced though. Most conscripts are technically qualified men whom the army could not induce to volunteer. Those with a university degree are drafted into the officer corps, the remainder serve as enlisted men. The intake of conscripts is only planned to amount to 3,500 per year, which means that the proportion of conscripts in the armed forces' total strength of 75,000 will not amount to more than 10 percent.

Pay and allowances in the Jordanian Army have historically been among the highest in the Middle East, especially for enlisted personnel, although they have been overtaken in many of the oil-rich countries since 1973. Discipline is strict, even harsh, but generally fair. It would be safe to say that in most cases, Jordanian soldiers enjoy a higher standard of living when not in the field than they could expect in civilian life.

Jordan does not maintain an organized reserve structure. Discharged veterans who are still physically fit are subject to recall up to the age of 40. They would only be mobilized to expand the support

services — only during extended periods of combat would they be thrown into the breach as combat replacements. But in the short wars that are typical of the area, that scenario is unlikely.

Armor provides the main punch for Jordan's army. With 320 M47, M48 and M60 U.S.-built tanks and 180 older British-built Centurion tanks, they are a force to be reckoned with. These tanks are supported by 140 Ferret scout cars, 700 M113 and 120 Saracen APCs. Twenty 155mm and 35 M52 105mm howitzers provide backup firepower. A plethora of 81mm, 107mm and 120mm mortars, and 106mm and 120mm recoilless rifles make Jordan one of the most powerful armies in the area. The standard infantry arm is the M16.

The Middle East has been a battleground for armor since WWII — a fact not lost on the Jordanians. And the only way to win against tanks is to have an adequate anti-tank arsenal. Jordan relies mostly on the TOW and Dragon ATGWs with a few RPGs still found sprinkled throughout the ranks.

The Jordanian Air Force has made a comeback since the 1973 war. Today they have 76 combat aircraft: 20 F-104A/B interceptors, 24 F-5E/F interceptors, and eight F-5A/B and 24 F-5E/Fs configured for the ground-attack role. Various cargo carriers give the Air Force adequate logistic capability.

Jordan is sufficiently strong to tax the strength of an invading army. That makes it a considerable deterrent to an Israeli attack. But there is little likelihood of that. Israel has no wish to threaten the Hashemite Kingdom — it's the most stable and least threatening of all the Arab states.

Defense commitments make a nation strong and Jordan has plenty of them. A 1967 agreement links Jordan with Egypt but little has come of it. More important is a 1970 treaty with Syria. Despite the sharp disparity of political systems, Hussein and Syria's President Assad are close friends. Regular liaison visits between the Syrian and Jordanian chiefs of staff keep relations on an even keel and present Israel with the nearest thing to a united front anywhere in the region.

Despite the volatility of the region, the potential for an anti-Hashemite upheaval in Jordan is slight. Since the 1970 ouster of the PLO, Jordan has not had to use its army in the internal security role. No outside power has any interest in encouraging the overthrow of Hussein. In fact, the Army looms so large that there is little likelihood of radical political change coming from anywhere but inside and they have seen to that possibility.

Jordan's high military pay and benefits make a coup unlikely. Hussein is a master of political survival and has consistently succeeded in finding a position which is tolerable to all the protagonists in the Arab-Israeli confrontation. At the same time, he has skillfully straddled the West Bank issue and the question of a Palestinian homeland.

Jordan just sits and waits. Should there be another full-scale war between Israel and Syria, Jordan could emerge unscathed. And that would leave Hussein as the undisputed king of the Arab world.

— Dale Andrade



SOF FEATURE

BALLOON BAILOUT

GIs Jump with ROK Airborne

by Don Pugsley



UNTIL the time I clamped my green beret on my head and shoved off for Korea it was my firm conviction that balloons were something you bought for kids at the circus. Then I got involved in an airborne circus and found out balloons can also be a means for parachutists to get their knees in the breeze without having to suffer through a boring airplane ride. It's the sort of exercise that makes military jumpers wonder if the Pentagon isn't paying too much in air fare to get them to the fight on time.

There's no fuel, maintenance or crew expenditure in a balloon jump. Just take one Korean Special Forces Jumpmaster, an open-air gondola suspended beneath a British surplus barrage balloon, add helium and you're airborne all the way from 1,250 feet. You get a whole new perspective standing in the cold wind, swaying at the mercy of a taut steel cable and contemplating everything but your navel.

That prompts even a Special Forces trooper to ask how in the hell he got there in the first place.

The day before all this weirdness started my team had wrapped up a joint U.S./ROK Special Forces field exercise. The Korean SF remained in the outback for continued training but we were extracted by Chinook helicopter and planted back at a base camp outside Seoul. Shortly after I cleared the rotor noise out of my ears, I heard the first rumor.

"Hey, Pugsley." A rear-echelon buddy of mine was wearing a silly smirk. "You know that friendship jump with the Koreans? It's gonna be out of a balloon."

"Right," I scoffed, shedding my ruck-

sack and weapons, "and my promotion to Staff Sergeant arrived in the morning mail. Who are you trying to shit?"

All night the rumors flew around the area. First it was a sure bet that we were in for a routine chopper blast and then everyone was swearing it was to be an exotic balloon bailout. When the straight scoop finally filtered down we discovered why no one could make up his mind.

The brand-new balloon system was the property of the Korean Airborne Infantry, a unit separate from our hosts, the Korean Special Forces. They couldn't seem to agree that Yankee SF jumpers should be allowed to play with the new toy. I don't know whether they were worried that one of us would shoot holes in the balloon or what, but it was apparently a real inter-service hassle. It was as if the Army had the balloon and Marines wanted to use it. Never hap-

pen. The professional rivalry was same-same in Korea and we were caught in the middle.

At first the Korean Airborne turned thumbs down on outsiders jumping from their rig but our ROK SF general cut through spools of red tape with a phone call to the presidential palace in Seoul. His bosses were more sympathetic.

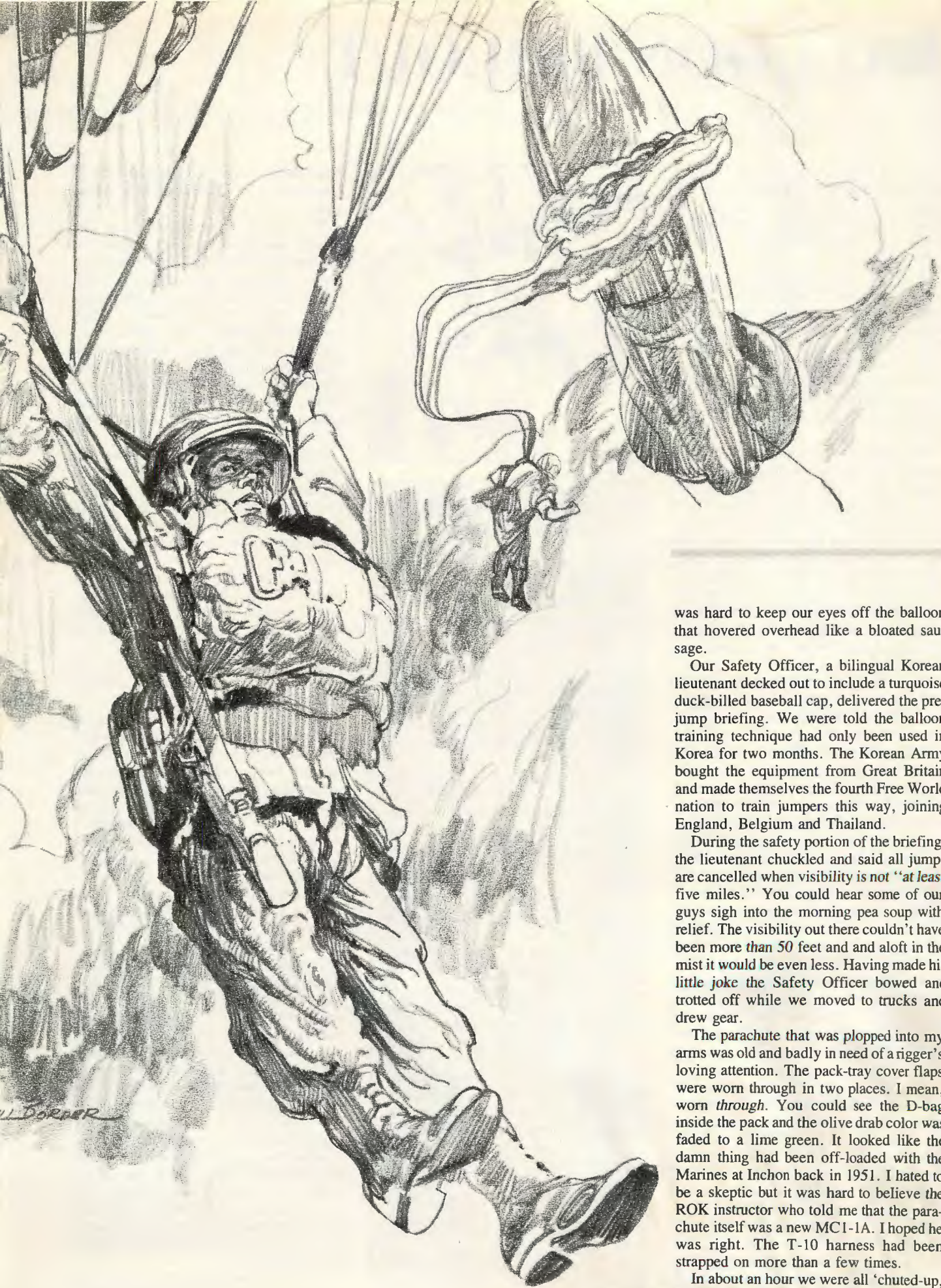
"Of course," said President General Chun, "the American Green Berets may jump from any Korean aircraft they wish." Or words to that effect. Anyway, the balloon blast was back on and we began to wonder whether we'd won or lost.

It was a long ride the next morning to an obscure, cleared DZ outside Seoul. The fog was as thick as barroom bullshit and even the breakneck civilian traffic had to slow down to keep rolling. At the DZ we walked to a cold briefing pit, eased down on cement bleachers and tried to pay attention but it

BALLOON BUSTER

Don Pugsley enlisted in the Army in 1968. Drawn to Special Forces School by the excitement, he got his Green Beret in 1968. A stint in Vietnam as a medic with the 5th Special Forces Group came next but was cut short after three months when his helicopter was shot down on the Cambodian border. He arrived back in The World in a body cast.

Pugsley recovered and moved to the West Coast where he took up writing in his spare time. Pugsley has co-written four screenplays and is a member of the Screenwriter's Guild.



was hard to keep our eyes off the balloon that hovered overhead like a bloated sausage.

Our Safety Officer, a bilingual Korean lieutenant decked out to include a turquoise duck-billed baseball cap, delivered the pre-jump briefing. We were told the balloon training technique had only been used in Korea for two months. The Korean Army bought the equipment from Great Britain and made themselves the fourth Free World nation to train jumpers this way, joining England, Belgium and Thailand.

During the safety portion of the briefing, the lieutenant chuckled and said all jumps are cancelled when visibility is not "at least five miles." You could hear some of our guys sigh into the morning pea soup with relief. The visibility out there couldn't have been more than 50 feet and aloft in the mist it would be even less. Having made his little joke the Safety Officer bowed and trotted off while we moved to trucks and drew gear.

The parachute that was plopped into my arms was old and badly in need of a rigger's loving attention. The pack-tray cover flaps were worn through in two places. I mean, worn *through*. You could see the D-bag inside the pack and the olive drab color was faded to a lime green. It looked like the damn thing had been off-loaded with the Marines at Inchon back in 1951. I hated to be a skeptic but it was hard to believe the ROK instructor who told me that the parachute itself was a new MC1-1A. I hoped he was right. The T-10 harness had been strapped on more than a few times.

In about an hour we were all 'chuted-up, Jumpmastered and good-to-go. Most of us

BALLOON BAILOUT

with more than six months in the airborne knew what that meant. It was time for the infamous stand-around-mill-around drill while the command elements made a *go-no-go* decision. The fog rolled over us like a cotton blanket.

While we cooled our Corcorans, the balloons were motored into position. There were two of them, each tethered to a wheeled vehicle that was the Korean version of our 2½-ton truck. The prime movers were deluxe models with glassed-in cabs, a large, enclosed hydraulic winch and gleaming paint jobs. Some poor ROK privates had clearly put in a lot of fatigue time on those vehicles.

The balloons were as long as a Kenworth tractor-trailer rig but with a much larger circumference. They looked like the barrage balloons I had seen in photos taken during the Battle of Britain. Both balloons were white and flabby looking. In the cold air, the helium had condensed and the whole rig looked none too stable or supportive. The gondola that would serve as jump platform was framed out of yellow tubular steel with a thin metal sheet for the floor. Beyond its festive color, the box was as stark and simple as a diving tower.

I was having second thoughts about going up in these gas contraptions when we began one of the "off-the-bus-on-the-bus" drills that the Koreans do so well.

"The jump is cancelled! Too much fog! Take 'em off and turn 'em in!"

Fine by me. It was easy enough to turn the gear back in and soon the whole unit was milling around saying unkind things about the Army — both American and Korean. Suddenly a ROK full-bird colonel rolled into the area and caused a flurry of saluting. He was a heavyweight from the airborne infantry and the nominal owner-operator of the balloons. He cut through the bullsh*t quickly.

"Fog no problem! Fog no problem!"

At least he was willing to put his own ass on the line. The colonel decreed that he and our SF team commander would make the first "friendship jump." Also fine by me. Nothing like a pair of high-priced fog dummies.

Our commander, Lieutenant Colonel Wheeler, walked over to the equipment truck, got a chute, strapped it on and joined the ROK officer in the gondola of one of the balloons. As the winch began to turn we watched them rise into the heavy air. The fog had lifted some but it was still thick and billowing. When the balloon had majestically risen to about 300 feet we lost sight of the entire lash-up. All we knew was that they were up there — somewhere — getting ready to leap. There would be no critique of their exit technique. After a minute or two I



SOF JUMPS THE BALLOON IN THAILAND

It might occur to non-airborne types that a balloon is *not* the best platform to practice parachuting from.

They might be right.

But then again, maybe not. Just think of it: a fairly cheap jump platform that can be dragged down at the end of the day. Even better, it has no wind blast and jumpers can take to the air whenever they're ready without fear of overshooting the DZ.

Balloon jumping is not a new idea. The British used it before WWI — the airplane hadn't even made it to the military that early. Others followed suit; even the Thai airborne got into the act. And that's where SOF ran into this novel game.

In the October 1982 issue of SOF, Jim Morris recounted the exploits of SOF staff looneys who decided to give balloon jumping a go. Everybody's reaction to leaping from one of those air-filled behemoths seems to be about the same. It's fun when it's over, but God help you while you're up there.

The Thais use their British-made balloon to train all their airborne troops. In fact, the first two of their five qualifying jumps are from a balloon. While a lot of the Thai military feel it's an effective training device, there is some opposition. One Thai general, who takes his paratrooping seriously, does not like the balloon because the exit procedures do not adequately simulate those of an aircraft. But then, once you're in the air, it's the same as a normal jump. And you're going to hit the ground no matter what kind of aircraft you leap out of.

heard the slap of what I assumed to be an opening canopy. Then I heard a second slap.

The two officers drifted into view. Our colonel had apparently been granted the privilege of jumping first. The Green Berets craned their necks and muttered about the men falling too fast. That was probably due to the turbulent weather conditions. Whatever was causing it, they were clearly bombing in at high speed. It didn't take us long to compute that their point of impact would be somewhere in the middle of our milling mob of gawkers. Everyone on the ground scattered to leave the officers plenty of room to crash and burn.

Colonel Wheeler zipped in and managed to do a good PLF on the only patch of sand this side of the South China Sea. He struggled to his feet looking like he had survived three rounds with Ali. Nothing was broken. The grin on his face indicated he realized he was a lucky man.

The ROK colonel's track took him smack into the parachute truck. I was close enough to read his expression and judged it somewhere between 'deep concern' and 'full-tilt terror.' It was obvious to everyone — including the good colonel — that he was bound to bust his ass. We hadn't reckoned on senior-officer serendipity.

He landed on the hood of the equipment truck with a thump that buckled the metal. From there he made a short hop to the fender and then dropped lightly to the ground. His canopy sighed and billowed behind him and he flashed us all one of those "I do it all the time" smiles. After a landing like that, I figured he probably *did* do it all the time.

"Airborne!" he screamed in Korean.

"Airborne!" we screamed back.

"Fog no problem!" he shouted.

"Fog no problem!" we shouted back.

Well, hell's bells, I thought. Maybe I can survive this thing.

The gondola rested flat on the asphalt. A Korean Jumpmaster put four of us in line and then brought us aboard. I was the first one in, which meant I would be the last one out. That proved to be a minor miscalculation. We hooked static lines to an overhead anchor cable and the JM safetied each one. He gave a thumbs-up to the ground crew and we left Mother Earth with a sickening lurch.

My pucker-factor went from a negative number to plus-four. I put fingerprints in the steel rail that must still be there. The winds aloft were stiff, causing the balloon to bob and the steel anchor cable to stretch. Our jump platform seemed about as stable as a balsa-wood boat in a whirlpool. The sooner I jumped out of (off of?) this thing the happier I would be.

At 500 feet we passed into brilliant sunshine. The gas in the bag expanded, filling

the tail fins, which swung us into the wind. We winched up a bit more and halted.

I've jumped at what was supposed to be 1,250 feet before and thought I'd recognize the view from that altitude. Wrong again, Sarge. I couldn't believe we were at that height. Either the U.S. Air Force had screwed up altimeters or the Korean had confused feet with meters. We seemed so far above terra firma that *the world looked round*.

The ROK sergeant's two-way radio crackled with a transmission in Korean. He acknowledged and I figured we were clear to go. All smiles, politeness and protocol, he unlatched the tiny chain that served to mark our "door."

"Stand, please." It was more a request than an order. The first jumper stepped to the gate and the rest of us shifted closer to the edge to watch his act. He got into a standard "door position," received a tap on

the shoulder and disappeared into the fog. The Korean JM didn't even look down. He pulled that first static line aside and hung it on a hook out of the next jumper's way.

The second man went out, then the third. He got a vigorous exit and the gondola swayed hard, testing my new-found balloon balance. I reminded myself to thank those clowns for the thrill — if we survived.

The Jumpmaster grinned and beckoned me forward. I took up a tight exit position with my toes over the edge of the platform. Maybe I'd simply stumble into this thing without having to make any kind of commitment. The gondola steadied and I felt a polite tap on my shoulder.

I made a short leap out and went into a galled-man's drop. High weirdness for a trooper used to aircraft exits. There was no engine noise. I actually heard my parachute deploying. First there was the pop-pop-pop of static-line stow bands breaking, then the same sound as my suspension lines unfolded. At the end was the startling whoosh of nylon leaving the deployment bag and the sharp snap of 90-pound test tape as I broke free.

On a balloon jump, I quickly realized, there is no blast or forward throw to facilitate canopy inflation and when I got to "five thousand... six thousand" I couldn't force myself to count any higher. The chant changed to "Deploy, motherfucker... Deploy mother..." Somewhere along about my third DMF I got drag from a billowing canopy.

Once stabilized, I did an equipment check and found my MC1-1A fully opened and my trousers — incredibly — dry. I slipped away from the balloon's anchor cable, a new requirement and totally outside my previous experience. Two previous jumpers failed to steer clear and wound up with slit gores. Then I turned into the wind and began to consider landing.

Beneath the cloud cover I sighted the DZ and steered for it. The field was soaked from rain the day before and my landing was soft and spongy. After a textbook PLF (You read your textbook and I'll read mine), I gathered up my chute and beat it off the drop zone.

That afternoon I received my silver Korean parachutist wings and a certificate designating me a qualified member of the ROK Airborne fraternity. That's all good stuff, but I was considering the reward in terms of the story I could lay on my fellow NCOs at the club. Good jump stories are hard to come up with after a while.

By the time I finished telling this tale, I could probably fill a balloon with hot air. They can get someone else to jump out of it. ✕





SNOW SOLO

Keeping the Faith in Frozen Waste

by Dale Andrade

“YES sir.” My desolate tone was poorly disguised by a forced smile. Looking over the rows of foam-filled beer mugs, I could see the Captain meant business.

“You need to get out in the cold and into winter shape. Get your butt up there this weekend.”

Under the din of barroom banter, I began to think. Cold had always been my worst enemy. The mere thought of spending a misery-filled weekend atop some barren, wind-blown pinnacle of rock and snow made my very soul grow icy. The cold was something you came in out of, not went out into.

The beers kept coming, but I just couldn't drown the thought of the weekend. While everybody else chattered on, I settled into my own private thoughts.

As a student of military history, I knew the value of winter survival skills. Many soldiers had marched into the icy maw of winter only to die before they could meet the enemy. But they had met a worse enemy — Old Man Winter. And a terrible enemy he could be.

History had recorded winter's fearsome power. Some of the most pathetic pictures of soldiers ever framed in a photographer's lens weren't even taken during battle; they were simply taken during winter. Hitler's Russian campaign rolled on in typical blitzkrieg fashion during the temperate days of late summer. But as soon as the blizzards came, the speeding war machine was slowed to a crawl by snow and wind howling over the steppes. And no amount of thundering artillery and roaring infantry charges could have halted Hitler the way bad weather had.

I didn't want to be that miserable, but what the hell, I was only going to be out in the cold for two days. It couldn't be *that* bad. I'd just borrow tons of mountaineering clothes and bundle up.

Walking out of the bar, reality slapped me in the face with a frigid blast of wind. Boulder, Colo. was being throttled to a standstill by the grip of record-breaking cold in January of 1985. As I walked huddled in my coat toward the car, my morale sank to a new low. This

icehouse was nothing compared to the numbing cold that would try to suck the life from me when I reached 13,000 feet. But orders are orders.

Winter mountaineering is not my calling. Born in the tropical clime of Honolulu, Hawaii, warm weather was in my blood. Balmy beaches with swaying palm trees and sun glinting from breakers that spent their fury on soft, hot sand were the backdrop against which I spent my early childhood. My move to the mainland had only been taken because I was too young to tell my parents “No.” And my favorite training station had been Fort Bragg in the summer. Heat made me feel strong. But this was no time to think of the tropics. I had to plan this adventure.

Breaking out the quads for the area around Loveland Pass, I searched for a suitable spot. Mount Sniktau looked like just the ticket. At 13,234 feet above sea level, I was sure it could provide me with all the misery I could handle. The trek from the highway to the peak would cover about 3,300 vertical feet of fairly mild slope. Mild compared to other routes I could have chosen, that is.

The route I mapped out would take me from Clear Creek, up an unnamed tributary that skirted Kearney


Open ridges blown clear of snow made it impossible to ski. Ski slots built into most mountaineering packs hold skis out of the way so you can trudge onward.

OUT OF HIS ELEMENT

Dale Andrade is not a winter mountaineer. Born in Hawaii, he quickly learned to love the sun and despise the snow. A love of things military sent him to U.S. Army Ranger School and OCS. Then, he spent six years completing university degrees in history, international affairs and Asian-area studies. Having spent his life training for national service, he invested that training and experience in *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*.

He has no plans to do any more winter mountaineering.





Gulch, and up toward the backbone of the Rocky Mountains, the Continental Divide. At least I could drive up to the area.

The ride up gave me time to gather my wits about me. If this turd hunt had any chance of being successful, I had better think it out.

Stay in the trees until the last possible moment. More cover, less wind. Only when the last vestige of green had disappeared would I venture onto the tundra. The trees gave me a sense of security. It all harkened back to the jungle again.

In Ranger school they taught us to take advantage of cover. Don't be seen, they said. If you're quiet, you can sneak up on the enemy, wipe him out and melt back into the trees.

Trees. That was the key. How could I use any of that training if there were no trees? Trees mean cover from the elements, as well as prying eyes. And on top of a bald peak, wind that blew over the Arctic stabs through the chinks in your fiber-pile armor. That seems self-defeating.

Now, I've never fought in the jungle. I've never even trained in the true triple-canopy variety, but deep down I am sure that I would feel at home there. And that means I won't feel at home in the mountains during winter.

After arriving at the take-off point, I gathered up my gear and headed for the hills. The start wasn't as early as I would have liked — it was going to be a tough push to reach a suitable base camp before nightfall.

The long spears of metal and fiberglass strapped to my feet responded easily in the light powder. Wading steadily through the unbroken snow that quilted the forest floor, my body quickly got used to the altitude. Skiing stretches and strains almost every muscle in the human body. It's great exercise; better than running or weight lifting. The best thing about skiing though, is the warmth. After a mile or so of stiff gliding, you'll want to start stripping layers of clothes off. After about three miles of this I had clothing draped and tied all over what had been a neat pack.

Sweat stung my eyes, and I laughed as I found myself comparing this to the graduation trek at Ranger School. Slogging through the snow . . . wading through the swamp. Fighting the cold . . . battling the heat. And you *always* sweat, and worry about water.

Until you've trained for the outdoors, you think that men only worry about water in the tropics. Not so. Water is — after warmth — the most important thing you fight for in winter. Most of the water in your immediate wintry world is frozen, except that in your body.

To melt it takes heat. Heat means fuel. Fuel means weight. Too much weight means sacrificed speed. And in the mountains in winter — just like war — speed is often the same as safety.

If you slow down, you increase exposure. In battle, that's usually exposure to fire. In the mountains you're exposed to avalanches, altitude, cold, and the limits of your supplies and training. And if you fall to any of those, your water freezes like everything else. Like the jungle, winter is neutral.

My reverie was interrupted when I noticed the switchbacking was getting easier. The slope's angle had increased, but the trees were thinning out. Since I could see across the valley, it was time to pull out the topo and get a fix on my position.

No doubt about it. This was the last good place to set up a protected camp.

Base camp. It was still cold, but I was starting to get used to it. That is, if getting used to it means being packed inside \$300 worth of cold-weather gear. The only part of me not swaddled in pile and nylon was my face. And it served as a reminder of what could happen if I lost some of these clothes.

Gone was the comforting warmth that coursed through my veins during the ski trip up. A few stationary minutes after I stopped to make camp and that penetrating chill was back in full force.

My D.I. used to say, "Travel light, and you'll sleep cold." He spoke the truth.

Some say that the U.S. Army is the most over-equipped military organization in the world. Maybe so. But after being stuck in this giant refrigerator, I'm not sure that's such a bad idea. Since gear makes the difference up here, it's best to equip our boys with the best.

It's funny. Most vets I know aren't winter campers. They probably know better. Aside from those weirdos who actually enjoyed Mountain Warfare School, most soldiers like it warm. Since the Vietnam War is foremost in the minds of Americans, it's only natural that steaming jungles and broiling humid heat occupy the thoughts of soldiers and civilians alike.

Skiing through the snow at lower elevations is an exhilarating experience.

It also would seem that a future spot for a tussle with the Soviets is the Middle East. Hot again. But many wars don't work that way. The recent REFORGER exercises in winter-time Europe make that clear. And besides, the main bad guys — the Soviets — know all about cold. Since World War I the Soviets have hurled exercise after exercise into their own Polar regions, because if we stonewall them in Europe, that's their end-run. American soldiers had better learn about it too.

And I was learning all about it. In a crash course. I started making things a bit more comfortable, namely looking for a way out of the blowing snow. A little hill with a snow drift tacked onto the southeast side looked like the perfect spot. Scanning the sky, I saw that there wasn't much time before the weather turned ugly. Angry clouds boiled from distant peaks and snow-filled whirlwinds moved down the tree-sprinkled slopes like dancing white demons. Those were the same peaks that I hoped to be straddling sometime tomorrow. That is if I got my shelter built in time.

This was a challenge. But isn't that what life is all about? As a young trainee going through Ranger School, that fact was pounded into me by a screaming sergeant with annoying regularity. "Can you candy-asses handle this? You make me wanna puke, all of you."





During the early days of survival training, I had been turned loose on the swamps outside Ft. Bragg to fend for myself. I told myself that I would think of this winter travail as just another exercise.

Brandishing my E-tool, I attacked the hill. Digging madly into the powdery snow, I burrowed down to the dirt. So far so good. Turning left, I carved chunks of wind-packed snow so they thumped to the floor of the cave and I could kick them out the door behind me.

I thought about enlarging my hole to a small apartment, but I satisfied myself with an eight-by-four-foot tunnel with the icy ceiling a scant 30 inches above the floor. It would be cramped, but I figured the small hole would be easier to warm. I'd only brought a light down bag and a heat-reflective tarp, so a warm cave was important.

Backing out of my hole like some snow-covered mole, I saw that I had finished none too soon. The snow and wind covered the forest like a grey curtain. Nothing was moving but me. That's because I was the only creature not under cover in the face of the approaching storm.

I shivered in anticipation of the long night. This was like finding shelter in the jungle or the swamps. Curl up under some leaves or a rock. Just stay dry — not always an easy task when everything is dripping in the humid heat. Here, in the frozen highlands of Colorado, the problem was the same. Stay dry or die.

With my gear stowed neatly in the rear of the snow cave, I crawled in after it. What an astounding difference. Out of the howling wind and driving snow, it felt 50 degrees warmer in the cave. This might not be so bad after all.

I leaned out of the cave and cut a door-block from the packed snow outside. Propped in the entry trench it would keep the inside of the cave warm and still. I punched a hole through the high point of the roof for ventilation and left the ski pole in the airshaft to clear drifting snow from its mouth.

As I pulled the gear from my pack and spread it around my den, I saw my camera. I hadn't known if it was going to work or not. Film freezes and breaks when it's wound in cold weather. And the first thing to go on a Nikon is always the self-timer. Oh, well.

Here goes. E-tool jammed into the packed-snow floor of the entry trench, I screwed a clamp to the handle and threaded the camera to the mounting screw. I checked the framing, crawled under my bag, set the self-timer and fiddled with the stove while I waited for the shutter to click.

There. So much for work. Back to keeping warm.

I repacked the camera, brought the E-tool in and pulled the snow-block over the entry. Time for food.

Now came the fun part. Have you ever tried to cook dinner while lying on your belly surrounded on all sides by a bluish-white dome of snow? It ain't easy. Digging into my ruck, I dragged out the stove and an MRE. Coaxing a flame out of the stove, dinner was soon on the way. With a little food in my gut, I felt like a new man. I actually looked forward to the new day.

Pushing the snow block from the entrance of my little hole, I scanned the scene from a position of relative warmth and safety. Seeing the pine forest through a gossamer veil of falling snow soothed my pessimistic brain. The forest took on a whole new perspective. When danger is viewed from safety it loses its ferocity. But I wasn't forgetting nature's propensity for throwing a tantrum.

ABOVE LEFT: When taking time out on a cold climb, it's a good idea to build a small wind break and drink fluids.

LEFT: You're talking cold. With a wind-chill factor of about 40 degrees below zero, it's a good idea to keep your face covered.

The jungle may seem a more hospitable host, but that can be just illusion. I kept telling myself that. Crashing through trails choked with vines is basically the same as trudging up a mountain smothered with windblown snow. The only difference is temperature. Lack of it, that is. The key is taking whatever the elements can throw at you. And they can throw plenty.

Sleep came early.

The dawn lit spectacular scenery. Nature had completely changed her face. Gone was the harsh, stormy mask of the previous day and in its place was a placid, postcard mountain scene.

With my gear stowed back in my pack, I was ready to go. Before strapping skis to my feet, I caved in my snow shelter; partly as a gesture of defiance to the storm which had failed to destroy me, but mostly so no one would accidentally step on it and fall in. Now I was off to tackle

the mountain.

Gliding through the trees was a piece of cake. Nothing to worry about here. These periods of solitude are always good for the soul. And they always seem to pop up at the strangest times. Only yesterday I had not felt sure I would escape from this winter wasteland. It had been the same in Ranger training.

On a squad-sized patrol sent off to the middle of nowhere in a snake-infested swamp (is there any other place for Rangers to be?), we huddled wet and miserable on a poncho-sized piece of dirt that sat above the slime. Things couldn't be any worse. Later that day, we emerged from the muck to find a spring surrounded by dry land.

All of a sudden things looked brighter. After a short

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COLD COMFORT

Soldiers and civilians alike have died of hypothermia (loss of core body temperature) while lying on the snow that could have saved them. Cold as it is to the touch, snow is an efficient insulator, and the right kind of snow shelter will be warmer in cold weather than any tent you can carry.

The star-like crystals of frozen water that make up snow trap air much like goose down. Air is the active ingredient in most insulation because it transmits heat with a fraction of the efficiency of liquids. A vacuum is even better, but nobody's figured out how to carry a six-foot-long Thermos on a backpack. So how can snow replace conventional insulation?

Well, it won't replace *all* your insulation. It's cold, and when you melt snow it's just cold water. But if you can hold yourself away from the snow, the air inside your dug-out drift will lose little heat to outside air.

Sleeping bags and foam pads make the hole a lot more comfortable, but tree-limbs, spare clothing, a space-blanket, plastic sheet, carpet scraps or C-rat boxes will keep your backside off the ice. A candle or two will make life downright comfortable. Since there's so much dead



In the howling wind and driving snow, a snow cave is the best shelter around. It's relatively warm and won't blow over in gale-force winds.

air between you and the storm, and since the inner snow on the cave reflects heat, a few calories go a long way.

In fact, the only problem you're likely to have is getting your snow-cave's air *too* warm and moisture laden. If your clothes or sleeping bag get soaked, you're in trouble. But by paying attention to the heat and ventilating the cave by an overhead air vent and opening or closing the ice-block door, you can stay warm, dry and safe.

Snow shelters are basically easy to build. That doesn't include igloos, of course. Eskimos spend a couple of decades learning to find the right snow, cut it correctly, and stack the blocks. But simple snow caves and trenches can be built in the time it takes to set up some tents.

First, don't dig in an avalanche area. A foot of the right kind of snow is enough to kill you.

Next, find a wind-packed or re-frozen drift that's deep enough to leave a couple of feet over your head. Or pack a big soft-snow drift, and let it freeze while you feed yourself, melt water, cut boughs or view the scenery. If there's room, and you've practiced, a snow-cave is the most heat-efficient snow shelter. Just dig down (E-tools are *the* cave-diggers, unless you've got ten feet of snow and you're putting half-a-dozen men in your shelter) to make an out-of-the-wind entrance, and dig out everything that doesn't look like a snow cave.

Keep in mind the external dimensions of the drift, and leave plenty of room between you and the outside. Cut the snow out in chunks if you can, because loose snow is harder to clear. Spread your ground-cover on the leveled floor and make yourself at home.

Carve shelves and candle-holders in the walls if you get bored. Snow shelters are easy to modify. Best of all, under severe winter conditions, you *don't* have to leave the comfort of home to use the latrine or dispose of garbage. Dig out a little alcove, excavate a hole in the floor, save the snow in a pile at the side, and leave yourself room to squat over the pit. If anything smells in the deep-freeze environment of that hole, cover it with snow and forget it.

If you've never tried a cave, dig a trench two or three feet deep and throw skis, snowshoes or boughs over the top. Cover the supports with a groundsheet and throw a foot of loose snow over everything. Again, check your ventilation.

It's best to be really prepared for the worst that can happen, because a shovel, sleeping bag, candles, ground sheet and backpacking stove can turn most winter misadventures into unplanned vacations. But if you have to dig in for the night, you can do it with a ski tip, snowshoe, pot, helmet or hubcap. Just remember: In a blizzard, your blanket is all around you.

— Bill Guthrie

SECOND CHANCE COMBAT SHOOT



Plaxco Bowls Them Over

by Jake Jatras



BOWLING pins that have behaved themselves and lived a clean life can look forward to peaceful post-retirement service as a lamp in some college dorm room or as a bar clock in some tacky joint in Phoenix. On the other hand, bad bowling pins which have been hanging out in the alleys too long may wind up as targets at the Second Chance Pin Wars. They will regret that.

• Pins tend to survive years of battering by bowling balls, but they are doomed to dust when they enter the sight pictures of shooters in Michigan who bust caps — and bowling pins — at record rates during the annual Second Chance Bowling Pin Combat Shoot. In 1984, a record 514 competitors showed up at Central Lake, Michigan for the competition. By the time they left, a whole slew of bowling pins had become matchsticks.

Richard Davis, the daring inventor of soft fabric body armor (who shot himself to demonstrate his equipment), knows how to have a wild time. He and his seasoned crew run one of the best shooting matches in the world. That figures. They've had considerable experience in the noisy world of combat shooters.

The first Second Chance match was staged 10 years ago in honor of all the cops who believed in Davis and his vests. Called the National Street Combat Shoot, it consisted of the pistols-only Five Pin Event, but each year Davis has expanded the shooting activity to include rifle, shotgun and multiple-weapon stages as side matches. Despite that growth, the match highlight remains the Five Pin event.

The object is simple. Five bowling pins are placed 25 feet downrange and three feet off the ground on a steel table. After the command to load is given, shooters place their guns on the rail. A shot from a Ruger Speed Six loaded with blanks signals the start. Shooters grab their guns and simply blast the pins off the metal mesa. Time and accuracy are the key factors.

Competitors' times are clocked when the last pin is blown off the table. But there are not that many quick, clean sweeps. Bowling pins are hard to hit and frequently do not behave as expected. Many shooters have to fire extra rounds at pins that were hit but simply fell over and began to spin erratically. That's the joker in the deck.

In many ways pin-shooting mirrors possible reactions of gunfight opponents. When

Soldier of Fortune's Mike Plaxco makes matchsticks out of bowling pins. With a score of 18.6 in the five-pin event Plaxco took the championship title home.

hit and wounded, many people also take a dive for cover, whirl or run — just like bowling pins. For practical-combat shooting purposes, bowling pins are nearly perfect targets. At standard engagement ranges, they present a size and shape similar to the preferred impact area on a human body. At 3½ pounds each, they are tough to cleanly blow off a four-foot-wide platform. That's likely what makes the match popular enough to attract some of the best names in combat shooting.

The expanded Second Chance Combat Match brought a lot of new names into the limelight, but once again it was *Soldier of Fortune's* "Master Blaster," J. Michael Plaxco, who set the pace in 1984 taking the top spot with a record 18.6 seconds in the Five Pin main event. Plaxco has become a genuine student of the unusual event. He believes a good shooter can take out all five pins in just a hair under four seconds. That's fine for a combat shooter of Mike's skill, but not many people can manage it with



such consistent speed.

In competition, six runs are fired and the best five are tallied for the score. Plaxco threw out a run of 4.1 seconds as his "bad" one, but many shooters would have gladly taken that time on the scorecard. Most good shooters like to hang back and fire their strings close to the end of the event. That lets them look at what they have to beat and warm up a bit before going for the gusto. Plaxco, who has always been known for his speed and smooth style, did just that and came up with a total time of 18.6 seconds. Everyone knew that would be the score to beat.

Pennsylvania's Jerry Barnhart fired a fright into Plaxco as he came from behind to log a final time of 19 seconds. Elliot Aysen, a veteran pin blaster from Louisiana, also made a 19-second charge to tie Barnhart for second spot.

Past Pin Champ Jim Blackard was a bit slow this year and only managed a 19.7 total time. The veteran was nearly matched by youthful Bob Denny from Iowa who turned in a score of 19.8 seconds.

As the contest neared the end everyone realized only one shooter stood a chance to edge Plaxco — fellow Arkansas champion Bill Wilson.

Wilson and Plaxco shook hands before Wilson stepped to the line and settled in to the task at hand. He gave it a fine shot, but could not manage to come up with the tight times needed to ace out the leader. Early in his strings Wilson was just not on target and he only managed to score 28.2 (70th place).

Competitors at Second Chance are wise to bring plenty of ammo because there is never a slack moment. Davis keeps shooters hopping with events such as the "Banzai Clang & Bang Charge," the "Light Rifle Pop 'n' Flop" and the "Premature Ejaculation Event." The euphemisms pretty much match the action.

The Light Rifle Pop 'n' Flop match was popular this year. It gives long-gunners, with or without scopes, a chance to blaze away at metal bowling pins set up at ranges between 60 and 90 yards using semiauto rifles against the clock. Rifleman Jeff Chudwin of Illinois set a tough pace with a 17.2-second average. He was never bested and walked away with a Second Chance Commemorative. Chudwin's time was so fast that Matt Smith's second place score seemed a bit distant at 26.5 seconds.

The Premature Ejaculation Event (PEE) held a captive crowd. People were dying to see what type of match Davis had conjured up this time. Submachine-gun marksmanship was tested as competitors were required to blast 30 rounds from a rattle gun at rotating targets within a four-second time limit. A Danish-made machine turned three IPSC Milpark targets away from the shooters so fast that they really had to concentrate to keep from blowing holes in the air. The PEE was taken by Phil Hanson with second

Second Chance Champ Mike Plaxco takes out Russian 'tanks' in the Banzai Clang & Bang Charge.

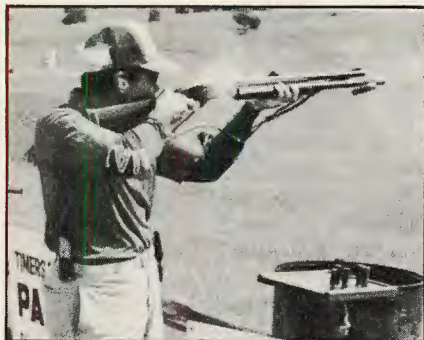


place going to Steve McCreary.

Most experienced shooters would never go up against a Russian tank armed with a shotgun but Davis and his innovative crew thought some might want to try. That's why they invented the Banzai Clang & Bang Charge. It was quite a test of overall shooting skill. Competitors had to take out 10 "tanks" with a scattergun, shoot down a plane (clay pigeon), toss a hand grenade into an enemy bunker and take out three bowling pins with a pistol.

Gene Rios turned on the speed to take first place in this event with a time of 20.1 seconds, followed by Walt Bodie at 23.1. John Schatzel was third at 23.5 and Jeff Chudwin placed fourth at 23.9 seconds.

After most of the shooters caught their breath, Davis revealed an opportunity for them to recoup any losses by entering the Eight Pin Unlimited event. Shooters blasted pins with the revolver of their choice. No semiautos were allowed and reloading speed was critical to stay ahead of the clock.



ABOVE: Texan Carl Hall blasts heavy steel targets posing as tanks. Shotgun slugs were needed in this part of the Banzai Clang & Bang Charge.

ABOVE RIGHT: Pennsylvania's Jerry Barnhart was hot, taking second place in the five-pin event with a score of 19.0.

RIGHT: Michigan squirrel-hunting just hasn't been the same since Second Chance owner Rich Davis got his new rifle. This modified 1918 Mauser Anti-Tank rifle is chambered in .50 cal. and is a hefty 43 lbs.

BELOW: An Ordinary Standard Shooter (OSS) raises his hands to pin-god Richard Davis, who answered his humble plea with a shower of \$1000 in prize money.





Gary Woodworth, a veteran pin blaster, captured first place with 5.5 seconds. Jerry Miculek was second at 6.5 seconds followed by Bob Denny at 7.2, Elliot Aysen at 7.7 and Barney Niner at 7.8 seconds.

An Eight Pin Four-Inch event followed, requiring revolver shooters to pull their short-barreled favorites out of the bag. Maximum barrel length allowed was four inches and all weapons were inspected to insure they had not been modified to give an unfair advantage. Bill Wilson was victorious in the event with a time of 6.4 seconds, followed by Don Koch at 7.5, Dale Holmes at 8.1, Bob Denny at 8.2 and Dave Wheeler at 8.4 seconds.

The Nine Pin Event forced handgunners to blow away nine bowling pins using 9mm pistols only. Winner was Ron Koch of Iowa with a time of 4.4 seconds. He edged out Bill Wilson of Arkansas who scored 4.5 seconds in the competition. The remaining winners were SOF's Plaxco at 4.5 seconds in a tie with Dave Wheeler of California, and Jeff Chudwin of Illinois at 4.6 seconds.

In the Mixed Doubles pin-shoot Master Blasters teamed up with women shooters and did their best to blow away a line of 10 bowling pins facing them at 25 yards down-range. Coordination and speed were the key elements as demonstrated by Kelly Steward and Jerry Barnhart who captured the top spot with a 3.7 second score. They were followed by Annette Aysen and Elliot Aysen. Kelly Steward got in the winner's circle a second time during this event by teaming up with Mike Plaxco to take third place in Mixed Doubles shooting. In Second Chance's Two-Man pin-shoot, the same rules applied for males only. Plaxco and Jerry Barnhart took home the loot with a time of 3.0 seconds.

The final event fired from the Second Chance line was a pin-shoot for three-man teams. Only one of the three shooters could be a Master Blaster. Teams were forced to fire two shotguns (one semiauto and one pump) plus a handgun of their choice. No back-ups were allowed for the shotgunners, in order to challenge their reloading skills. Each shooter on the team had to clear all of his pins before he could swivel to help his partners. Blake Gann, Jim Weaver and Phil Tillotson blasted their way to victory in the Three-Man team event with a total of 5.1 seconds.

During the Second Chance combat-shooting competition, the action continued both on and off the range. A survival game ran continuously every day and Davis created rock & roll heaven with a Ma Deuce, an M60 and a batch of submachine guns for shooters and visitors to use. It was a lot of shooting and fun for the money Second Chance charges. A \$200 entry fee entitled shooters to free food, free beer and plenty of rapid-fire competition.

Richard Davis and the Second Chance crew claim it will all happen again this year in June. You can get details by writing Second Chance, Dept. SOF, Box 578, Central Lake, Michigan 49622 — June 8th-15th. ☒

TOP FIFTY

1. M. Plaxco	18.6	25. T. Holmes	23.6
2. J. Barnhart	19.0	26. W. Palazzolo	23.7
3. E. Aysen	19.0	27. J. Evans	23.8
4. J. Blackard	19.7	28. D. Stanford	24.0
5. B. Denny	19.8	29. B. Gray	24.0
6. D. Miculek	20.8	30. D. Wheeler	24.0
7. W. Roberts	21.5	31. J. Robbins	24.4
8. J. Highley	21.5	32. E. Rook	24.6
9. R. Carter	21.9	33. J. Schatzel Jr.	24.9
10. G. Carver	22.0	34. L. Wells	24.9
11. A. Leckie	22.0	35. J. Even	25.0
12. J. Clark Jr.	22.2	36. A. Allen	25.0
13. J. Weaver	22.3	37. M. Jaye	25.2
14. C. Harrison	22.4	38. W. Nesbitt	25.4
15. J. Miculek	22.7	39. C. Schnieder	25.5
16. H. Hoy Jr.	22.8	40. M. VanderBroek	25.8
17. A. Jason	22.8	41. D. Jenks	25.8
18. C. Adelson	22.9	42. N. Tangen	25.8
19. C. Dixon	23.2	43. M. Murray	25.8
20. L. Harper	23.3	44. S. McCreary	25.9
21. B. Gann	23.4	45. S. Schaefer	25.9
22. K. Tapp	23.4	46. L. Lake	25.9
23. D. McDonald	23.5	47. D. Smith	26.0
24. M. Stolen	23.5	48. T. Kilhoffer	26.1
		49. G. Robison	26.1
		50. L. Roberts	26.1

ABANDONED IN ANGOLA

FNLA's Uncertain Future

by David Mills



SOF foreign correspondent David Mills walked nearly 1,000 miles to inspect the part of Northern Angola the Angolan National Liberation Front (FNLA) claims to control. At the invitation of the General Staff of the FNLA, Mills arrived in Kinshasha, Zaire on 5 August 1984. That night he began his trek to Luanda, Angola.

Dodging patrols and bullets, Mills found that the FNLA does not control most of Northern Angola. Rather, there are a few fairly secure enclaves that are ignored by the Popular Movement for the

Liberation of Angola (MPLA — the Marxist organization that is now generally recognized as the central government). This uneasy truce between the MPLA militia and the FNLA villages may spring from vastness and sparse population of the area, but the MPLA may have logistics problems nearly as bad as the FNLA's.

The SOF correspondent and his FNLA escort found the going somewhat easier since most of the Marxist government's regular troops were committed to an ineffectual attempt at driving the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) out of

Southern Angola. But the FNLA escort was not taking Mills directly toward his goals of meeting and interviewing the FNLA General Staff and making a recon patrol deep into MPLA-held Eastern Angola.

He began to mistrust his guides. Being the only white Western journalist in the northern half of a country that's twice the size of Texas was bad

enough, but Mills found himself without rations or safe water. He was clearly being taken on a circuitous route through enemy territory minding a mysterious schedule which his escort was desperate to keep.

In the first part of his report carried last month in SOF, Mills was at the edge of what he had been told was FNLA country. But he wasn't safe yet. He would walk nearly two weeks without enough food or water in order to reach the FNLA General Staff. This is the rest of his story.

STARTLED awake by a mechanical click, the first thing I saw was the bore of a Browning Hi-Power. My focus narrowed. Behind the weapon was the face of a white man I met at Hereford.

"I-I'm not armed . . . just a reporter."

"Ta-ta, Mills," he whispered.

I was still stammering when he dropped the hammer.

The muzzle blast woke me. I jerked up into a sitting position, trying to unwind myself from a GI poncho. Nine Angolans sleeping within seven feet of me all woke up and

turned to watch.

"I'm sorry," I muttered in English. Then I realized they wouldn't have a clue what I meant. And I wasn't really sorry at all. Their lack of patrol discipline was bringing on the nightmares.

FNLA troops camp on hilltops, light evening fires, follow major trails, use river fords and walk on the skyline. It's certainly not what I'm used to when operating in enemy territory. Most of the time it made me so nervous I could nearly forget how tired I was . . . but not how

hungry I remained. After 20 days in Northwestern Angola, my diary entries mainly recorded whether I'd eaten or not in the last 48 hours and speculated about whether I was likely to eat in the next 48.

This was the sparsely settled Angolan badlands, but the area remains extremely dangerous for anti-government forces. Our party had already been ambushed twice and we were virtually unarmed. Three-quarters of our ammo was expended in the two contacts. We had been buzzed by Angolan LOH-type helos and that was not the worst of it.

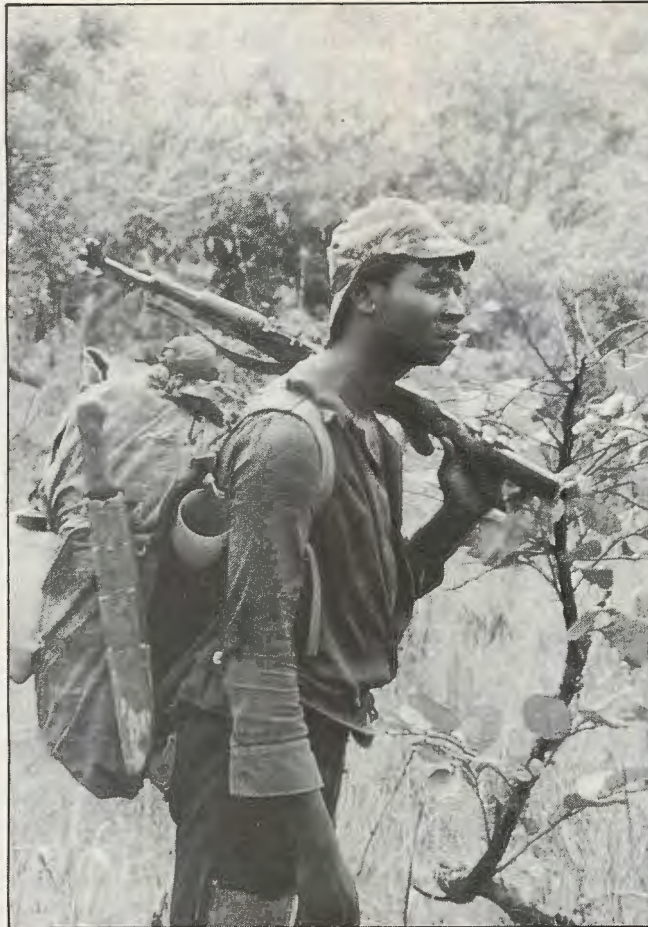
We had moved onto SAS turf.

Cabinda is an oil-bearing part of Angola that is outside of Angola's proper borders on the north side of Zaire's corridor following the lower Congo. Contract soldiers — most of them ex-SAS with a handful of American Green Berets thrown in — roam around sensitive areas near the oil production like unchained watchdogs. I don't know if they work for the oil companies or for the government but it doesn't matter. They are here.

And aggressive counter-guerrilla patrolling is part of their mission.

Impoverished, mismanaged Angola is justifiably concerned about Cabinda's vulnerability. Petroleum is Angola's number-one export. And in Angola, Cabinda means oil.

Dogs of War run loose here. Many of them are former mates of mine. If one of them found me, it would have been an automatic death sentence. They would jump to the wrong conclusion concerning the reason I was there. Even worse, they would realize they had been recognized. It would leave them no choice about my fate. That's the sort of thing that brings on nightmares.



Unusually well-equipped guerrilla carries tiger-stripe ruck.

17 August 1984. We were in the Northwestern corner of Angola proper, deep in FNLA (not FNLA-controlled) territory, right up next to the narrow Zairean corridor that separates Cabinda from its mother country. I was still awake, recovering from my vivid nightmare when handclaps roused everyone for another day of tough humping. My companions began gathering their meager kit. We would be walking again — but not on an empty stomachs.

Our days in Camp Zero-X had been filled with meals and exotic food. I felt nauseated half the time from eating too much after being starved for nearly two weeks. At first, I found myself feeling irritated with Angolan villagers for their obsession with food. Then I remembered how little they ate on the march. In the village we even had a

religious respite before resuming the march route.

At reveille in the bush we would roll over, rock back on our haunches, jam our kit back in our packs, brush our clothes off, shoulder our packs, and walk. That routine is interrupted for prayer in the villages. The European bias in the FNLA is demonstrated not only by their Portuguese leadership, but by religious practice. FNLA members are Catholics. There is little in the way of formal religious paraphernalia, but rosaries abound in the villages, and prayers accompany rising, meals and lights-out.

It was shortly after 0500 when we moved out and the villagers were just beginning to sweep the

beaten ground for morning clean-up. After a couple of hours on the march I began to feel clear-headed and fit again. I'd slept and eaten to excess and the exercise was doing me good. I felt so strong I didn't want to stop for breakfast at 0900. Of course, my reticence may have come from knowing what breakfast would be: *funj*.

I picked at a small handful of the congealed, gluey manioc porridge loaf while my comrades wolfed all they could get. As they grabbed for thirds, I had eaten less than half of my original quarter-pound and I tossed what was left back into the common supply.

Funj isn't just tasteless, it's hard to handle. The stuff sticks to your hand and won't make little balls for easy consumption. You can't sculpt it or dribble it, and it's edible only in emergencies. Only Angolans know why they make it.

A little after 1000 hours we marched again. My escort seemed more relaxed than they were before we reached Camp Zero-X. They chattered as they walked briskly toward the sea. The situation made me consider tactics — or the lack of them — displayed by the Africans on both side of this continuing guerrilla war. Both the FNLA and FAPLA forces hole up for the night on *high ground*.

That's not so bad if you've got cover and fields of fire. But patrols continually choose campsites on barren hilltops. And they *always* light fires.

In the dusk of a clear day you could easily spot a burning campfire from three miles. With binoculars you could pick it out at double that distance. Most of the hills we had camped on had one wooded side which gave



Food only an Angolan could love: FNLA soldier forms *funj* loaf from thick manioc porridge.

FNLA SITREP

The FNLA is dying.

That's not from any lack of courage. It took balls for Vilela to come back after me. They fired on at least 40 regular FAPLA troops, equipped with heavy machine guns, RPGs and AKs. And that attack was launched against such odds with less than 35 rounds of home-made ammunition between them. Yet such courage is largely wasted.

Freedom fighters of Northern Angola aren't being hunted to the ground by the army of Marxist Angola. But that's not because they fear the FNLA. FAPLA has economic, diplomatic and logistic problems that make such ops impossible. And then there's UNITA.

Dr. Jonas Savimbi's Union for the Total Independence of Angola is succeeding. And because they're giving FAPLA serious competition, the FNLA languishes in the wastes of the north. Every word of publicity, every dollar, every bullet Savimbi gets is that much less for the FNLA. It shouldn't work that way, but that's how it is.

And the Portuguese emigré leadership of the FNLA must be problematical for Angola's black neighbors. Though African fears of latter-day colonialism aren't realistic, it doesn't mean that such ideas don't color their thinking about the FNLA. Simple geography means that if Angola's northern neighbor, Zaire, isn't enthusiastic in its support for the anti-communist resistance, there's nobody else for the FNLA to ask.

That doesn't mean the FNLA has given up. Not at all. They seem to control much of Zaire and Uige provinces, and enough of Luanda province to make the MPLA uncomfortable. Considering their materiel problems and nonexistent logistical train, that is impressive.

Still, remember that their control amounts to relatively free movement in an area the central government seems to ignore, perhaps because it would be too much trouble to root out the resistance. Besides, there's no wealth to protect in the FNLA's part of Angola. The coffee market is soft, Angola's relatively small deposits of diamonds are in the east, and petroleum production is safely insulated in the Cabinda exclave. With FAPLA's problems in the south, they can afford to let the FNLA run a few villages.

Such poverty and relative anarchy spawn other problems for the FNLA. Poor economic development of the area denies the FNLA targets. Also, there is not enough of any portable commodity for the resistance

to trade for adequate supplies of arms, ammunition, food and medicine.

And nearby targets of opportunity are beginning to attract the attention of UNITA. Early in 1985, a well-organized and well-armed UNITA long-range patrol shot up the airport of a diamond mine at Cafunfo in Lunda province. That's less than 400 kilometers from FNLA territory. It's also more like 1,000 clicks from UNITA's usual stomping grounds. Savimbi's people are aware of the power vacuum in the north.

If Savimbi were so inclined, he could save the FNLA by asking them to join him . . . if he finally establishes a base in the north. Although they were originally separated by differences in politics and backers, UNITA's capacity to supply the FNLA might sweeten such a deal for the destitute northerners.

But that's a long shot. And not the least of the the drawbacks to that solution is the distance involved. FNLA territory is 1,000 air-kilometers from UNITA's usual area of operations. A route that would skirt FAPLA and MPLA territory would at least double that distance on the ground. UNITA's present supply lines are short and secure. Unless Zaire would allow passage of truck convoys, extending control into the north would needlessly expose those lines under present conditions. And Zaire isn't likely to agree.

If it pleased, Zaire could restore black-African support to the FNLA. That's not likely to happen. Zaire's got enough internal problems without provoking a war with Soviet-supported Angola.

So Zaire has little help to give, and less likelihood to give it. UNITA is waging an entirely too-successful war in the south to do anything as desperate and ill-advised as to try to end-run and surround the Luanda government with both flanks exposed for 2,000 miles. Over 25,000 Cuban troops, supplemented by Soviet and North Korean advisers, probably wouldn't permit that. But UNITA's success — while limiting the aid and publicity the FNLA might have — protects the FNLA by giving FAPLA something better to do than hunt down unarmed dissidents in the jungle. But if UNITA fails, that protection will no longer exist.

The FNLA claims 7,500 armed troops. I doubt there are 2,500. They also claim to have soldiers in the south. Unfortunately, I found out, they are ex-FNLA serving with South Africa's famous 32 Battalion. And, finally, they claim that the leadership and organization outside the country directs operations inside the country.

I can only contradict that. The only working organization I saw was inside Angola. FNLA executives in Zaire do not appear to send food or arms. I doubt they send much money into Angola . . . they don't seem to have more than they need.

So what is the FNLA to do? Without unlikely external support, they have two choices. They can either sit back in the jungle and manage their own affairs in the absence of real control by the central government, or the refugees and leaders can return to Angola and fight.

Don't get me wrong. I don't think the return of the leadership will improve the FNLA's position. There would be no arms, no ammunition, no food and no medicine. And aggressive action might irritate FAPLA enough to move them to clean up the area.

But it is sad to think that there are tens of thousands of freedom-loving Angolans who are still hanging on at home, while they haven't seen Holden Roberto in years.

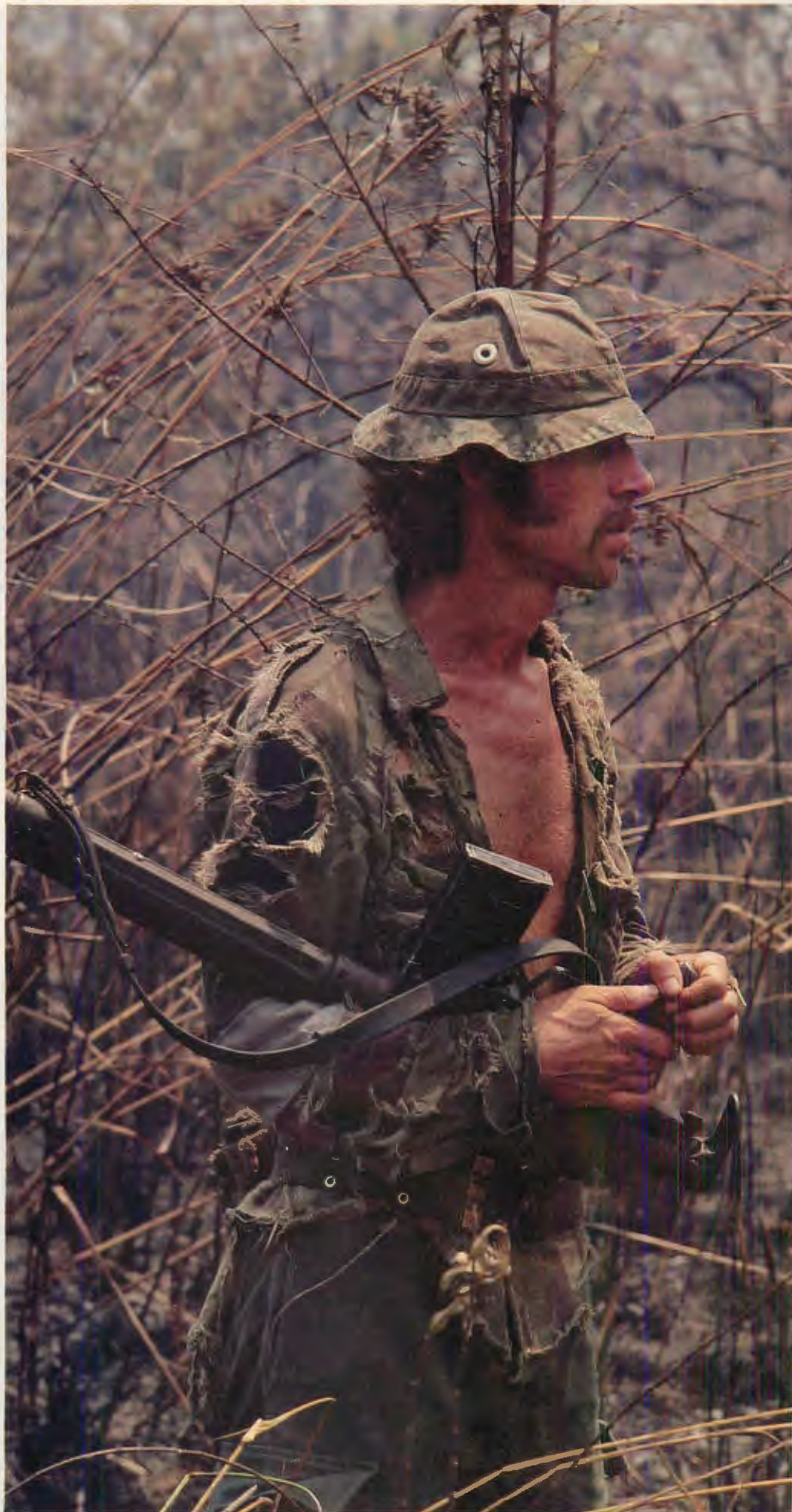
attackers a concealed approach route to well within assault range. I'd never observed the use of an anti-tracking drill, a flanker or a sentry. To top it off, the favored blanket among the FNLA troopers is made of stark-white sacking. Nights were uneasy for me.

Dawns are worse. In similar conditions, patrols from a Western army would be up two hours before sunrise and be several safe clicks away before laying up to let the dangerous time pass. FNLA troops act like African civilians, waking at first light, slinging their bags and marching down the hill in single file. The silhouettes make superb sniper targets. The hairs on the back of my neck always stand up for that first klick.

It all leads me to conclude that contact between FNLA formations and marauding FAPLA patrols are few, far between and not very resolutely carried out by either side. It's a *de facto* peace resulting from the fact that the FNLA isn't mounting any significant operations against either the central government or the local militias. Speculate all you will about lack of motivation but the real reason for this lack of decisive action is a decisive lack of supplies. Even when the FNLA can manage to come up with sufficient field rations, they rarely have enough ammo to attack in force.

Fortunately, FAPLA is unable to take advantage of the situation. While the MPLA militia tracks the FNLA and seems to hit patrols when it's convenient, the

Inspector General Villela of the FNLA fired on FAPLA ambush patrol to cover SOF correspondent's escape.



government-supported militia also lacks logistics for raids in force over the hundreds of clicks that can separate settlements.

FNLA territory was last invaded in 1982. A force of some 1,200 regulars and militia overran the area for 62 days. FAPLA lost 66 killed and only one FNLA fighter was captured. FNLA commanders claim FAPLA is well-supplied with helicopters and arms, but they're not aggressive.

19 August. It seemed like I was watching a black-and-white nuclear holocaust movie. An ashen sky was held away from the scorched earth by billowing pillars of smoke. Silent black men covered with white ash raised grey dust as they walked through forests of thorn trees turned to charcoal by fire.

For seven hours the only noise was the ash-deadened thump of our feet on the incinerated plain. Around noon the smoke pillars closed on us and we could see yellow flames at their bases. We spotted the green of watered grass and my guides chattered and pointed at it. Our tiny column snaked toward the area of vegetation which appeared thicker and taller than the elephant grass that hampered our passage across most of Zaire province. Heavy blades with a surface like sharkskin slapped our faces painfully as we hurried deeper into the thicket to escape the encroaching fire.

We finally broke through the wall of grass into an arena of damp, trampled earth imprinted with marks from animal claws, hooves and pads. We were on the banks of a clear lake which looked about four acres in area.



Unusually strong FNLA garrison displays the usual arsenal of old, damaged weapons with empty magazines.

FNLA soldiers rarely have enough of anything but fatigue, hunger and disease.

The hell with the fire. My escorts dropped their packs and produced fishing gear. They pressed *funj* into balls around inch-long rusted hooks and tossed the bait into the lake. The half-dozen ferocious-looking, 18-inch catfish they caught became a welcome lunch.

As we ate the air grew thicker and hotter. Pillars of choking smoke bent over the lake. The fire was approaching rapidly. When we could hear the splutter and crackle of burning elephant grass we





reassembled our packs and waded into the lake. My gear was too heavy so I left it lying on a mud spit, slung my FAL in the assault position and gingerly waded into the water. The rifle was for protection from crocodiles. I'd rarely seen a permanent pond in Africa that didn't have a croc or two as resident rulers. A 15-foot croc can drag an adult hippopotamus under and drown it. At several inches under six feet and only 150 pounds, I'm a much easier meal.

The threat didn't seem to bother the FNLA troops. They splashed and capered into knee-deep water, passing the lone RPG-7 and its two rounds back and forth to keep them

away from the heat on the bank. When that paled they sat down in the lake with the tepid water up to their chins. We stayed in the water for an hour, staying cool, sponging off ashes and dirt and watching the fire pass us like a river of red and yellow flowers. I stood as close to the shore as the heat would permit, thumb on the FN's safety, and kept watch toward the deeper water. Nothing appeared.

By the time the fire burned down to a bearable level, it was 1700 and we weren't going anywhere. We gorged ourselves on more catfish and slept on the smooth, beaten mud near the water.

24 August. Our rate of march has been around 40 clicks a day. We crossed another mountain range

and two major roads in the last three days. The roads are unsurfaced dirt tracks about 12 feet wide in most places. There were signs of truck travel, more than I've seen anywhere else in Angola. These tracks joined major areas of Tomboco and Lufico, and Tomboco and Sao Salvador.

Signs of transport gave me the creeps but it's the cold that kept me awake at night. Low temperatures cause incredible dew in the highlands.

Condensation sloshed inside my poncho as I shivered through the hours of darkness. The first hours of humping the next day are miserable until kit and clothing begin to dry.

Plowing through long wet grass yesterday morning, we almost walked into the River Mebridgege. The Mebridgege flows gently over most of its course, but several rapids make it unnavigable. We couldn't wade, but there was a small dugout hidden on the bank, so the most expert boatman ferried us over one at a time.

There was some excitement today. In our usual hypnotized way, we were marching across a smooth, exposed ridge when the pointman saw figures on a hill about five kilometers away. We still did not regularly spot people in this area, so we beat it into the forest. My companions seemed convinced the distant men were hunters. If that's the consensus and this is supposed to be FNLA country, I couldn't understand why we were hiding in the trees. Apparently, the troops are not confident enough of their control to risk contact.

27 August. We've slogged the jungle and dodged people for the last couple of days. Yesterday we sighted two FAPLA soldiers, but they didn't see us. In spite of outnumbering them five to

one the FNLA troops weren't eager to close. The ammo situation again, but it didn't bother me.

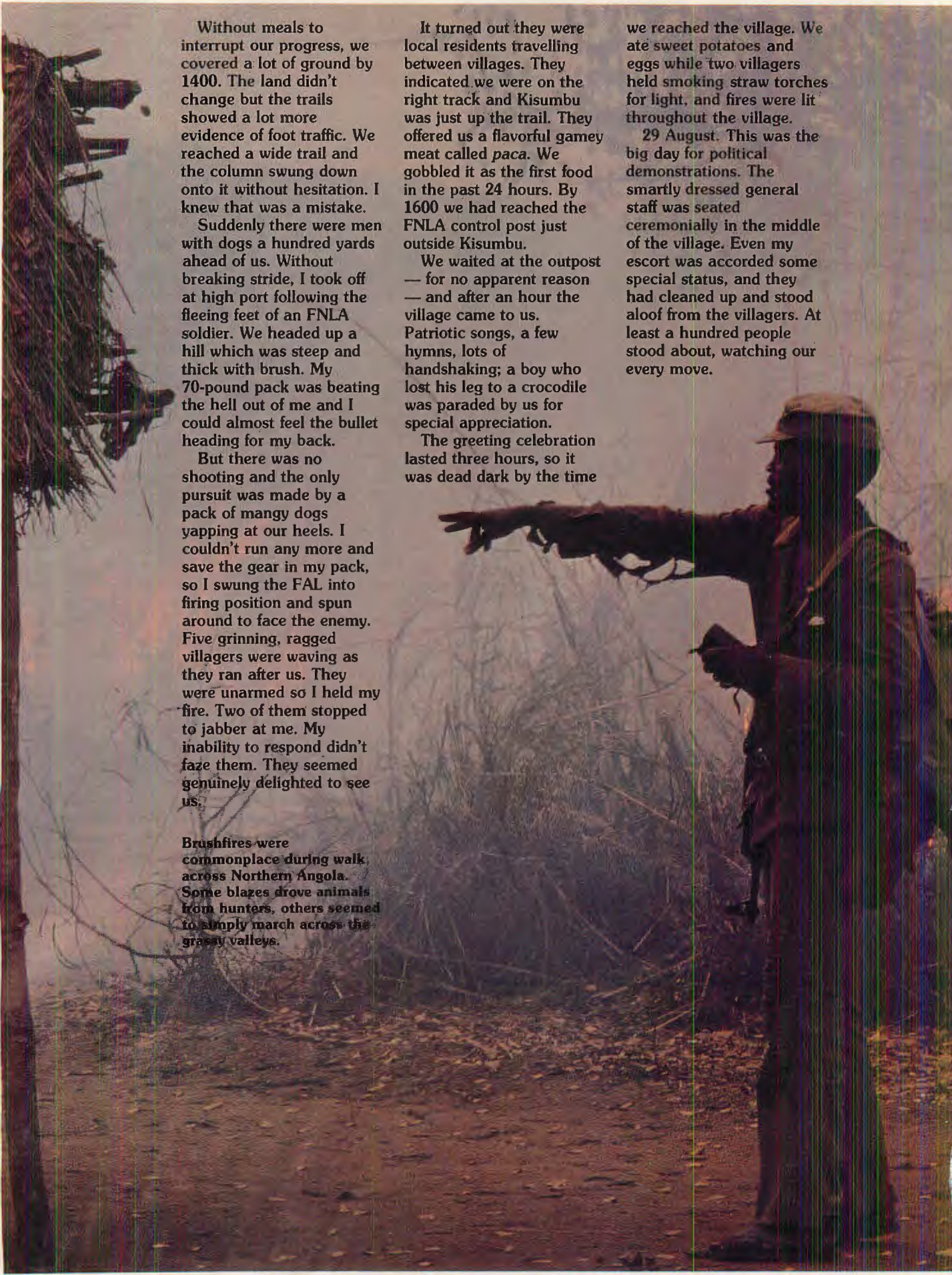
We were scheduled to reach a village and that meant I might get to sleep under a dry roof.

At 0800 hours my guides told me we were two hours from the village. We were still walking at 1100. At noon there was a long conference. I leaned against my pack and began *The Boer War* for the second time as the Angolans pointed and gesticulated and yelled. I wasn't perturbed in the least. I'd been in the army most of my adult life. I knew *exactly* where we were.

We were lost. After 15 minutes of discussion, we set off roughly in the opposite direction from our approach march. The topography was complex and forests were sometimes heavy, but it wasn't hard for me to keep track with my compass. We were criss-crossing the area looking for that damned village.

We didn't find it. After what must have been 60 kilometers in about 13 hours of steady walking, my escort decided to call it a day. We didn't have any food. I leaned against a tree, fumed and read until dark. My bodyguards argued into the night and were still heatedly guessing where the village might be when I drifted off to sleep.

28 August. We headed off on our original compass bearing at a brisk pace. We have apparently decided to skip whatever wide spot in the trail we were searching for yesterday. The next village is 50 kilometers distant. I figured that was all right as long as we find it this time. By the end of the day I may even want *funj*.



Without meals to interrupt our progress, we covered a lot of ground by 1400. The land didn't change but the trails showed a lot more evidence of foot traffic. We reached a wide trail and the column swung down onto it without hesitation. I knew that was a mistake.

Suddenly there were men with dogs a hundred yards ahead of us. Without breaking stride, I took off at high port following the fleeing feet of an FNLA soldier. We headed up a hill which was steep and thick with brush. My 70-pound pack was beating the hell out of me and I could almost feel the bullet heading for my back.

But there was no shooting and the only pursuit was made by a pack of mangy dogs yapping at our heels. I couldn't run any more and save the gear in my pack, so I swung the FAL into firing position and spun around to face the enemy. Five grinning, ragged villagers were waving as they ran after us. They were unarmed so I held my fire. Two of them stopped to jabber at me. My inability to respond didn't faze them. They seemed genuinely delighted to see us.

Brushfires were commonplace during walk across Northern Angola. Some blazes drove animals from hunters, others seemed to simply march across the grassy valleys.

It turned out they were local residents travelling between villages. They indicated we were on the right track and Kisumbu was just up the trail. They offered us a flavorful gamey meat called *paca*. We gobbled it as the first food in the past 24 hours. By 1600 we had reached the FNLA control post just outside Kisumbu.

We waited at the outpost — for no apparent reason — and after an hour the village came to us. Patriotic songs, a few hymns, lots of handshaking; a boy who lost his leg to a crocodile was paraded by us for special appreciation.

The greeting celebration lasted three hours, so it was dead dark by the time

we reached the village. We ate sweet potatoes and eggs while two villagers held smoking straw torches for light, and fires were lit throughout the village.

29 August. This was the big day for political demonstrations. The smartly dressed general staff was seated ceremonially in the middle of the village. Even my escort was accorded some special status, and they had cleaned up and stood aloof from the villagers. At least a hundred people stood about, watching our every move.



From the villagers' enthusiasm, the confidence with which they travel and the fires burning late at night, the FNLA seems to control most of the interior of southern Zaire province. The leaders told me that 4,000 people live in 16 FNLA-controlled villages. But they also told me that they could call up 9,000 men from Zaire province alone. By the way, this is 1,500 more men than the governing organization claims to have in their armed forces.

Furthermore, I can't tell who's really in charge of what. Every villager I've met here has some sort of title. I don't know if the troops are similarly confused, or if the FNLA passes out titles instead of pay.

Yet, they must be doing something right. This healthy anti-government enclave is well within 200 kilometers of the center of the Marxist government at Luanda. That's like Poughkeepsie declaring war on New York City.

FAPLA hasn't even been in the village for a couple of years. Then, several hundred men operated in the area for a few days and pulled back. FNLA sources claim they killed seven and lost one. It couldn't have been much of an operation. Aside from the usual small assortment of FALs and AKs, the villagers only have an M79 and an FN MAG machine gun. Still, the FNLA say the attack they beat off lasted five days and was supported by air and artillery. I wonder what really happened, and why the Angolan government couldn't — or didn't — crush the revolt.

Even more curious is the fact that we sometimes see civilian aircraft overhead which fly from the airfield at N'zeto (which the FNLA still call by the old name, Ambrizete). N'zeto is only 90 kilometers away.



Fasting is the norm on the trail, so FNLA troops eat nearly anything that moves.

Rag and twine LBE carries small bundles of FNLA trooper's kit.

Only 35 soldiers appeared for the assembly and 150 villagers of all ages attended to sing. (Village leaders claim a population of 400, but I think they double figures on principle.) There were many speeches and songs and much praise of President Holden Roberto. But when I asked, the leaders said he'd never been in this village. That interested me greatly. Surely Jonas Savimbi gets around more than that.

30 August. By this time, the FNLA's idea of a scheduled tour of Angola had slowed my passage so I was only about 150





kilometers — as the buzzard flies — from the Zairean border after 19 days of hard marches. I needed to get closer to Luanda.

I walked away from the village at 0700 hours. But in the few minutes' walk through the village, before heading toward the sea and the capital, I gathered an entourage. By the time I was on the trail a half-dozen political leaders, a military commander named Rafael and various strap-hangers swelled our ranks to about 35.

After a couple of hours walking we came on a larger river, the Loge. Crossing in a large dugout canoe we entered Luanda province.

Luanda province appeared little different from the rest of what I'd seen of Angola. We met no one. There was little evidence of animal life. Open grassy valleys alternated with forested hills.

But scenery wasn't the most pressing matter. Starving and gorging, and bad water had taken its toll on me. I had constant diarrhea and stomach cramps. And I was getting feverish. Fortunately this day's schedule called for a short march. After about two hours we reached the village of Kivungu, a typical Northern Angolan village of about 400.

Since this was a normal Angolan village, we had the usual Angolan entertainment. Over 80 people sang political songs before we got breakfast.

Everything was the same as it had been in every other clean, orderly village we'd visited.

This sameness lasted until breakfast started. The usual assortment of *funj*, sweet potatoes and eggs was brought. Suddenly the villagers surged toward us, demanding pills for their various ailments. Villagers pushed and shouted as they mobbed us.

"No shit. I'm going to die because I didn't bring more vitamins."

Finally, Inspector General Villela — the head of our formation — ordered soldiers to hold them back. It was a curious demonstration. No one was angry, there was some agitation, but the villagers were insistent that they get pills.

After the near-riot at Kivumbu, we walked for another two hours until we came to a sort of market or meeting place. The ground was beaten hard by feet and shaded by trees, but there was no village. There was, however, more orchestration of my tour.

Representatives of several villages met us there. They brought small delegations of villagers with them, and they sang songs and made speeches. Again I heard references to and praises of a leader they'd never seen. The best thing about this meeting was that we lost several political members of the party. They returned to Kisumbu.

Before we stopped for the night, the column dragged me through two more villages. There I heard the FNLA top ten political songs for the sixth and seventh times that day.

5 September. For the last five days I've been dragging a tail of more than 50 people. Aside from their willingness to travel in this exposed fashion, I've seen nothing of military significance.

No, I take that back. There was one important piece of military news.

A couple of days ago we accidentally attended the funeral of a village military commander who shot himself. I understand perfectly. If I were trying to run a war under these conditions, I would kill myself too.

The FNLA are brave enough, they survive in a harsh environment and some of them have been fighting for more than a decade. No one can complain about the freedom fighters in Northern Angola. They just don't have the means to fight the central government. They don't have many weapons, they have fewer effective weapons, and they don't have any ammo worth mentioning.

But vets know that guns don't make armies. The FNLA's enemies have the same basic equipment of any other small army: trucks, aircraft, artillery and the backing of a major world power. The FNLA has tire sandals, grass rope, homemade ammo and *funj*.

No contest.

FAPLA knows it. Besides, even if the FNLA had the occasional capability to rocket airports and ambush the odd military column, FAPLA has still bigger problems with UNITA in the south. UNITA has guns, ammunition, transport, radios, the support of the Union of South Africa, and their leader commands them, on the ground, in their area of operations.

Since Angola joined the Organization for African Unity (OAU), the FNLA seems to have become something of an embarrassment to the black African community. So Holden Roberto's followers are given a safe-house in Kinshasa and little else.

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MILK-RUN MISADVENTURE

Ain't No War in Qui Nhon

by Bill Watson



AT 4,000 feet over the shimmering jungle, the co-pilot leveled the lumbering Huey and set a course for Ben Het. The fresh early-morning air at altitude was a welcome relief from the summer stench that blanketed Vietnam below their rotor wash. The veteran aircraft commander breathed deeply, smiled across the cockpit and arched a leg up over the instrument panel.

"You know," he drawled into the intercom, "now is a good time to brief you on my 'catastrophic total-helicopter-destruction emergency procedure'."

The new-guy co-pilot, who was called Opie for his passable resemblance to a young Ronnie Howard, winced and tightened his grip on the yoke and collective controls.

The motley crew that kept Watson's Huey flying over Vietnam.

"Now you gotta understand," the AC continued, loosening his restraints and scrunching into the armor-plated seat, "that this procedure is only to be used when we know for sure that we're tits-up. I mean, if we take a missile up the tailpipe or lose the Jesus nut and have a complete head separation.

"By the way, Opie, you know how the Jesus nut got its name, don't you? Because when it comes off and you watch the rotor blades fly away, all you can say is 'Jesus!' Well, I'm gonna do more than that. I'm gonna stand up and drop my drawers and straddle the stick. And when we hit, it's

gonna ram that stick home. Then when the accident investigation team inserts on us, they're gonna say 'No wonder the stupid fucker crashed, he had the cyclic stick up his ass.' I want them to try and figure that one out."

Opie acknowledged his pilot's comment with a wary sideward glance.

"No, really, Opie, I'm gonna do it. Ain't that right, Bob?"

The crewchief keyed the intercom. "Yessir, if John says he's going to do it, you can bet on it."

"See?" The AC straightened in his seat, stared down at the jungle and nudged the man flying the bird. "I'll show you one right over here that augered in on Tet of '68." He took the Huey controls and

dropped the nose violently down toward Tan Can where the road turns west to Ben Het. Then he cranked into a turn over a blackened circle next to the highway.

"Do you know the fully-armed bursting radius of the 'C' model Huey gunship?" He answered his own question with an electronic cackle. "Fifty meters." As John continued to fly on course for Ben Het, Opie craned his neck to stare through the Plexiglas and did not take his eyes off the hole in Vietnam's scarred skin.

"Hey, Opie, wake up! That's nothing to write home about. There's over 5,000 helicopter holes gracing this lovely countryside. There's a big push on to break 100,000 before we go home." The co-pilot shook his helmeted head and took the controls back from a man he thought had seen one too many combat missions.

Ben Het Special Forces Camp was set in at the Central Highlands off-ramp of the Ho Chi Minh Freeway. It had obviously gone a

CHOPPER PILOT

Chief Warrant Officer-4 William C. Watson was a fresh-faced 20-year-old chopper pilot when he was assigned to the Republic of Vietnam in 1970. Shortly after he arrived, several missions served to furnish the essence of this story. He has served tours in Korea and Germany as well as in Vietnam. He is presently stationed in Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

Watson's writing strives to show the attitudes and rationalizations of young soldiers who shouldered the working burden of the Vietnam war. His author's fee has been donated to the Army Aviation Museum Foundation in memory of SP/4 Robert Schneider, the crewchief in this story. Schneider was a young farm boy from the midwest who took great pride in maintaining his helicopter. He was killed in Vietnam in November of 1970. Anyone who wishes to make a donation can send it to Army Aviation Museum Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box H, Fort Rucker, AL 36362.

lot of tough rounds without being KO'd. The small, red-clay hill on which it perched was ringed with shell craters and endless rows of tangled concertina wire. A burned-out NVA tank lay dead on the outer perimeter looking from the air like a squashed water bug. The structures inside the wire were nicked and gouged by shrapnel. It was certainly no tourist attraction, but it was a must stop for certain veteran chopper crews who knew about the delights Ben Het had to offer.

"Flush shitters at Ben Het." John rubbed his gloved hands anxiously up and down his thighs. "Ain't that right, Bob?"

Opie squinted in disbelief and turned to the crewchief for explanation. He had not

been in Nam for long, but he was painfully aware that bowel movements were directed toward sawed-off 55-gallon drums full of diesel fuel in most areas.

"That's right." the crewchief crowed, clearing his machine gun and getting ready for landing. "They got two porcelain *flush shitters* at Ben Het."

The Aviation Company at Kontum had drafty outhouses serviced faithfully by "Willie the Shitburner," an ancient Vietnamese who daily disposed of the aviators' excrement. Opie began to take an internal inventory to determine whether or not he would avail himself of the luxurious shitters of Ben Het. He had no doubt John would. When Opie had first met the veteran pilot at Kontum, he had been complaining about the discomfort caused by Army-issue shitters.

"Hey Opie, you know where we're going after we fly some ash and trash for the Ben Het folks this morning?"

"Negative."

"Affirmative. We're going to Qui Nhon to fly the Secretary of the Army up around the Highlands tomorrow. They want a bird that knows the area up here. The important thing is that we get to reposition this afternoon for tomorrow's mission. Tonight we stay in Qui Nhon. There *ain't no war in Qui Nhon*. No fighting at all. Only pretty girls and bars. It's the Land of the Big PX. Ain't that right, Bob?"

Bob didn't have a chance to reply. Hector, the door gunner, keyed the intercom. "Fat Albert and Fluffy were down there and said that they got Koreans around the town who go out and stack bad guys like cordwood if they even take one rocket. Hair, teeth and eyeballs all the way. They even sell roses down there on the streets."

"That's peaceful," said John and then pointed out the pad at Ben Het for Opie. It was on the lower level by the 155s.

"Go ahead and shut her down, Opie. I'm going up to see what they've got for us." The AC pulled off his helmet, popped his belts, jumped down from the Huey and started up the hill toward the SF Tactical Operations Center. He dropped out of sight down a near-vertical staircase into the TOC. The air inside was heavy with the smell of damp, musty earth.

"Hi, I'm Bikini 1-7." John propped his elbows on a counter and grinned at a Green Beret operations NCO.

"Good morning." The SF trooper was in no hurry. "Coffee is upstairs in the team house. We can brief there."

John bounded out of the TOC, up a flight of stairs and jogged anxiously toward a small white building on the very top of the hill. He stopped and stared with obvious delight at the structure which contained two small, closet-like rooms, each with a commode and separate door leading to the outside. In one deft movement he swept open a door and began to un-do the trousers of his flight suit. He was backing in with trousers at half-mast, ready to relax into a sitting position when he turned around to look at his intended target.



Crewchief Bob Schnieder preening his Huey.

John shot out of the toilet enclosure charged with adrenalin. His eyes had adjusted to the dim light and he'd seen *something in the commode*. There was something alive in there. Some sort of lumbering animal. He stood outside a moment and then gingerly opened the door a crack. A local Montagnard was squatting atop the toilet seat straddling the bowl.

"Jesus Christ," he thought as he slammed the door shut again, "if the motherfucker is gonna shit like that, why the hell did he come all the way here to do it? They ought to teach the bastards how to use the door locks."

Holding his trousers up with his left hand he stepped to the other door. He sat down and had just started to relax when the first rocket hit. It was close. John held his fire. Maybe it was just a single H&I.

And then another 122mm screamed overhead and landed to the rear of *the facility* jarring the small building and releasing the dust stored on the two-by-fours. John sprang forward through the door and out onto the ground.

"Damn, *can't even take a shit* around here without somebody trying to kill you." He *rolled over on his back to pull his trousers up*. "I can see the telegram now," he muttered in a rage. "We are sorry to inform you that your son has been killed in a crap-*per attack*."

The rockets began falling on Ben Het like raindrops. John low-crawled to the entrance of the TOC bunker and plopped inside. As he stood to brush off the dirt and congealed red clay, his trousers dropped to his knees.

The Special Forces sergeant was a veteran but he still paused a moment to consider why a chopper pilot would jump into his bunker and drop his drawers in the middle of a rocket attack. Apparently he'd seen stranger things as a soldier because he was able to recover sufficiently to tell John his bird had been hit by the incoming.

John readjusted his trousers while images of a shattered Huey and broken bodies in bloody flight suits flashed through his mind. "What about the crew?"

"I don't know. Our wire down there is out. All I know is that it's been hit."

John turned and started for the steps as the ground rumbled with the impact of another NVA rocket. The Ops NCO shouted at his retreating back.

"You're crazy to go running around out there now. We've got people in the perimeter bunkers to get them if they're hurt. You haven't even got a flak jacket on!"

John was already outside and charging down the hill toward the helo hot-pad. Dark smoke spiralled up from the area. Another rocket whined overhead and John saw the orange-blossom flash as it impacted near the helipad. He heard more on the way and crouched next to the sandbagged wall of a diesel-generator position. The next rocket impacted directly onto the generator. Fortunately, the sandbagged walls served as a blast shield against most of the shrapnel. John was blown over by the concussion. He lay still for a moment. He knew he was still alive because there was a pounding bass drum in his head, a roaring buzz in his ears, and he saw two of everything.

John shook his head, squinted his eyes to focus and took off down the hill again. He couldn't see very well so he held his arms out in case he bumped into anything. His blurred vision caused him to lose sight of the ground and he loped downhill by fully extending his legs while they were still several inches above impact with the earth. The effect was a sort of modified goose-step. The soldiers in the perimeter bunkers peered in amazement as the Son of Frankenstein lurched through a dust cloud and stomped his way down the hill.

At the edge of the pad, John closed one eye and squinted at the burning helicopter. He could see the blue remnant of his crew chief's hammock tied to the seat pole. As he stumbled toward the wreck, three more rockets screamed into the area.

Concussion from a close one blew him off his unsteady legs. He felt something tugging at his heels and looked back to see two of his crewchief hauling him into a nearby bunker. John couldn't hear what the two Bobs were obviously screaming at him so he shouted back.

"Everyone OK?"

Both Bobs nodded and dragged John across the corner of the pad into the bunker. In the 20 minutes it took for the shelling to stop, John had managed to realign his eyeballs, but still had nothing but static on the aural antennas. He continued to rest propped up against a wall.

Slowly Ben Het began to resurrect itself from the violent rocket attack. The crewchief left his pilot and walked outside. In a few minutes he reappeared with a sorrowful expression on his face.

"They really got her, John. There is just a big blob of melted magnesium out there on the pad." A lot of his hard work had just

gone up in smoke.

The pilot draped an arm around his crewman's shoulders. "That's OK," he screamed to see if he could hear himself. "We'll get a new bird."

Bob jerked away from his pilot as though he'd been hit. "That ain't funny, John. What the fuck you doing screaming in my ear?"

"I can't hear nothin'."

Bob peered into his pilot's grimy face. "You can't hear nothin'?"

"What?"

They walked up the hill to the TOC. As they entered down the steps, the Special Forces NCO looked up at the beat-up pair of aviators. "We gotta get back to Kontum to get a new bird so we can get to Qui Nhon tonight or they'll give that mission away." The Secretary of the Army might understand about his scheduled helo being destroyed by enemy fire, but John was not about to have his crew miss a night in Qui Nhon. There was no war in Qui Nhon and John needed no more war just now.

...there was a pounding bass drum in his head, a roaring buzz in his ears, and he saw two of everything.

John walked up to the staff sergeant and yelled in his face causing the veteran to cringe. "We gotta get back to Kontum. Call over to Dak To and have one of our C&C birds swing by and pick us up."

The Sergeant stared at the wild-eyed pilot for a moment and shook his head. "I know a lot of you helicopter pilots are crazy so I didn't get upset with you walking around here with your pants down. And if you want to go running around in rocket attacks, that's OK with me too. But you are not going to yell at me that way." He moved around to the other side of his table in a threatening manner. "I didn't blow up your goddamn helicopter."

John couldn't be sure but he thought he might be in trouble. He took a step back and looked for Bob. His crewchief was rolling on the dirt floor and roaring with laughter.

"He can't hear," the crewman gasped. "He can't hear." The sergeant peered intently at the pilot.

"I told you not to go running around out there."

"What?"

It was almost 1300 hours by the time they got back to Kontum. The hearing in John's left ear was beginning to return. As they jumped off the bird, the crewchief grabbed his pilot's arm. "John, you should go see Doc Russo while we're here. You probably got a concussion."

"Fuck doctors. If I see him, I won't be going to Qui Nhon. He'll ground my ass for observation. The only medicine I need is a night away from rockets, bullets and bad guys."

"Fly heading 135, Opie." John delivered the instruction accompanied with violent hand gestures which the co-pilot was convinced constituted evidence that the pilot was still suffering from the pounding he had taken that morning. "That will take us direct to the Mang Yang. We'll follow the highway to the coast from there." John slid down into his cross-country relaxed position and lifted a leg up over the instrument panel. The intercom buzzed.

"You know, Opie, because you're such an FNG, with only two weeks in country, I better give you a briefing so that you don't just go hog wild down there tonight and get yourself in trouble. When you see all those good looking girls down there tonight, your pecker is gonna get as hard as Chinese arithmetic, and you might be tempted to just jump indiscriminately on the first one, but boy would that be a big mistake. Fifty percent of the whores in Vietnam have VD and the other 50 percent have TB.

So here's the key, Opie. If they cough, fuck 'em. Ain't that right, Bob?"

John laughed and grimaced against a monumental headache. His crewchief was convinced by now that they were all going to die anyway. "That's affirm. Truer advice has never been given. And if you get the Black Syph — you know, the kind they can't cure — they send you to an island off the coast until you die and they tell your folks that you're KIA."

They bumped over the Mang Yang, vibrated past An Khe and rhythmically bounced their way down QL 19 to Qui Nhon By-The-Sea.

John smoothly dropped the chopper on the transient ramp. He keyed the intercom "OK, Opie, shut her down. I'm going to operations to find out what's up." Before the blades had stopped John came jogging back across the ramp, grinning from ear to ear.

"OK, the mission brief is not til 0900 hours tomorrow. Get your purses, girls. We are going downtown."

Before they even got through the airfield gate, John could see a stand outside the city that was filled with beautiful flowers. They cleared the gate and he stopped to search the rows for a rose. He didn't see any.

"Roses?" John tried English on the ancient woman tending the stand. She looked puzzled.

"Roses?" John tried to clean up his pronunciation for her and wound up shouting like a pissed-off Drill Sergeant. The woman's face creased with fear. She bowed politely and waved her hand down the rows as if presenting her wares. It was no use. John grabbed a pretty bouquet of red flowers that he thought looked closest to roses. He handed the old woman a one-dollar MPC note and roared for the convoy to get underway. Qui Nhon was just down the road.



A sign proclaiming a hotel should have read *bar*. Or *girls for hire*.

"Every man for himself." John waded into the fray waving his bouquet of flowers. The four-man crew walked up to the bar and ordered beer. The bartender set up four rusty cans of Carling's Black Label.

Bob was not impressed with the joint's wares. "Jesus. That's the same shit we got in Kontum. How come every beer can in Vietnam is rusty?"

His question went unanswered as all eyes turned toward a cluster of three Vietnamese women sitting in a corner of the establishment. John had a target in sight and was about to fire for effect.

"God is she beautiful." She was sitting with two other girls at a table in the corner. He pushed away from the bar, walked straight to the table, pointed a finger at her — thus precluding any question about who he meant — and made his pitch.

"Come on. I'll buy you a drink." Before she could answer, he pulled the bouquet from behind his back and presented it to her. She gave an embarrassed smile and stood up. They moved to a small table.

"How much for all night?"

Hueys were the workhorses of the Vietnam War. Chopper crews took great pride in their birds.

"Ten dollars. Do you have a room?" She spoke nearly perfect English.

"No, not yet. Hey, how did you learn to speak such good English?"

She smiled, picked one of the flowers from the bouquet and slid the stem down into John's breast pocket. "I have small room. You can stay with me."

"OK. Ten bucks, huh? Here's twenty. That way I don't have to screw around all night buying you that tea. I'll be right up here."

John rejoined his crew at the bar just in time to fly through a heavy drunk front which rolled into the area leaving in its wake a shattered mass of unfocused eyes, slurred words, war stories and aviators who tended to fall down for no apparent reason.

Late in the evening John was chatting with an Australian adviser who held the opinion that the English were all assholes. John was ambivalent on the subject.

"Well I don't know about all that. I thought you guys were about the same. You

all talk funny."

That prompted a disparaging remark about Americans who wore flowers and both men reeled off their barstools to settle the matter. John felt a tug on his arm and looked down to see the Vietnamese girl standing by to escort him out of trouble.

"You must go now. You told me to get you at 12 o'clock. It's time to go now."

"I'll be with you in just a minute." John lurched threateningly toward the Aussie.

"No. You go with me now or I lock my door and you sleep in bar!"

The Australian broke into a grin as John shrugged off his evil intentions.

"Goodnight, mate."

John's boots echoed down the concrete hallway. She opened the door and flipped on the light. In a moment he was prone on an Army-issue cot and she was peeling off her clothes.

"Shit," he slurred. "They're going to get me for violating the Pure Food and Drug Act with you."

In the morning he found her attached to him like a suction cup. He checked his

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SOF HISTORY

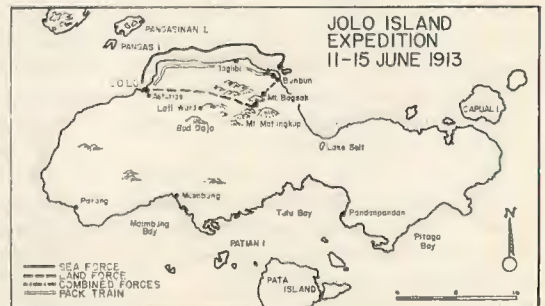
The fierce fighting for Bagsak Mountain on Jolo Island in the Philippines took place from 11 to 15 June 1913. Print issued by

the U.S. Government Printing Office. DA Poster 21-48. Original painting: H. Charles McBarron

BLACKJACK AT BAGSAK

Pershing Crushes
Philippine
Insurrection

by Bill Brooks



HERE'S one you won't find in your stash of Trivial Pursuit questions. What war introduced the United States to Southeast Asian politics, jungle warfare, a hostile liberal press at home, counterinsurgency, water torture and ineffectual attempts at winning hearts and minds?

Vietnam, right?

Wrong. These problems sprang up in a war fought 50 years before Vietnam, a war that zoomed an obscure Army captain to the rank of general and national celebrity practically overnight, a war that set a precedent for bad relations between the U.S. military and a liberal press and a war that gave American soldiers one of their longest-lived small arms, the Colt .45-caliber semiautomatic pistol. It all began in the Philippine Islands where some dissidents decided to stage an insurrection.

The Philippine Insurrection was the logical extension of Muslim resistance to Christian European rule in the islands, a situation that had continued since they were conquered originally by the Spanish. The bloodbath, involving ethnic minorities, Philippine government forces and Americans who had become the dominant influence in an archipelago that fell under their control following the Spanish-American War, began in 1899 and lasted until 1913.

Although the Filipino nationalist leader of the insurrection, Emilio Aguinaldo, surrendered in March 1901 and took the oath of allegiance to the United States in April, the Muslim islanders continued to reject Christian Filipino and American control. The main Philippine island of Luzon and Manila, the capital, quieted down but the resistance was far from over in other places.

The less populated southern islands became the new focus of rebellion. First Samar, then Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago were consumed by the violent hatred of the fierce Muslim Moros. Massacres brought equally violent American reprisals and the fighting degenerated into a rabid war of attrition — complete with concentration camps, sabotage and torture. American troops flooded the area and began to get acquainted with vicious guerrilla warfare.

The American soldier became what he fought. The *insurrectos* were fighting a war based on terror and the Americans fought back just as cruelly. They developed a "water torture" that made even the Spanish cringe. If a captured *insurrecto* refused to divulge information, four or five gallons of water were rammed down his throat and then forced out by kneeling on his stomach. The treatment was repeated until the prisoner talked or died. Most talked.

The ordeal of battle in the islands was so intense that for years veterans of it were introduced at officers' mess with the salute: "Stand, gentlemen. He served on Samar."

In 1901, an obscure officer by the name of John J. Pershing was serving with occupation troops in the Philippines. When he was promoted to captain, Pershing got the unpleasant assignment of leading a



BIRTH OF THE BOOMER

Throwing back ferocious charges by the Moros in the Philippines brought into sharp focus the need for a less cumbersome and more powerful sidearm than the .38-cal. revolver. The Army found the answer in the Browning-designed .45-cal. Colt automatic pistol. They were so impressed that they adopted it in 1911. The Model 1911 remained unaltered until the introduction of a new version in 1926. Developments begun in April 1923 by the Springfield Armory showed the need for improved sighting and weapon control. Colt went to work.

The changes instituted included decreased trigger width, increased back-projection grip safety, an arched mainspring housing, a recess cut for the trigger finger, shortened hammer spur and a

The U.S. Army M1911A1 pistol is the modified and most familiar version of the pistol with enough striking power to stop fanatical charges by Moro tribesmen in hand-to-hand fighting.

Photo: Bill Brooks

new frame legend which read M1911A1 U.S. ARMY. That version is shown here. The famous .45 accompanied American fighting men into World War II, Korea, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, Grenada and Lebanon. In fact, it looked like this weapon — tested so many years ago in combat in the Philippines — was going to be immortal. The official death knell was finally sounded in January 1985 when the Pentagon announced a switch to the Beretta 92SB-F 9mm Parabellum pistol for America's soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines as a result of the controversial JSSAP tests.

— Bill Brooks

small garrison to the interior of the island of Mindanao, a hotbed of Moro violence. His mission was to befriend or subdue the Malanao Moros around Lake Lanao. The hearts and minds of the Malanao had to be won over so northern Mindanao could be occupied by American troops without fear of ambush or sabotage. He realized a propaganda campaign was the best way to reach those hearts and minds. Pershing established his headquarters in the coastal town of Iligan and began to make contacts with the local *dattos* (chiefs) and sultans.

He studied the conflicting indigenous cultures and promoted government understanding of local problems. By cultivating friendship with *dattos* and sultans, Pershing began to build a network of allies on northern Mindanao. When Pershing finally received an invitation to attend a Moro gathering he knew his tactics had worked.

The bloodless scheme had functioned flawlessly in the northern islands, but farther south resistance stiffened. The Maciu Moros began to harass American outposts.

It was really nothing serious but American prestige was at stake and something had to be done about such impudence. Pershing put together a punitive expedition and set off for Maciu country. A few small and bloody confrontations later, the Maciu were disarmed and defeated. (See map.)

The Moros knew how to fight *offensively* but back them against a wall and they would withdraw to improvised forts called *cottas* and fight to the death. Generally *cottas* were on hilltops or water-guarded peninsulas. They were anywhere from 150 to 200 feet square, with earthen walls 10 feet thick and surrounded by ditches or a moat filled with sharpened stakes. Brightly-colored banners over the walls snapped in the breeze. The *cotta* was designed to be a fortification of last resort and whole families aided in the defense. Once inside they were prepared to ascend to Muslim paradise as martyrs.

In June 1913, after Pershing had been promoted to brigadier general and appointed military governor of Moro Province, an uprising took place on the small



Promoted to Brig. Gen. in September, 1906, Pershing used a military might and Psy Ops to defeat the Moros. Photo: U.S. Army

JOHN J. PERSHING: BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

They called him "Black Jack." John Joseph Pershing was born near Laclede, Missouri on 13 September 1860. A West Point graduate, Pershing started out his military career in counterinsurgency. Campaigns against the Apaches in New Mexico, the Sioux in South Dakota, the Spanish in Cuba and the Moros in the Philippines gave him the experience

needed to fight this new kind of war.

When Francisco "Pancho" Villa's depredations against American towns and ranches culminated in a raid on Columbus, N.M., Black Jack chased him back across the border and kept on going. Pershing pursued Pancho from March 1916 to February 1917. Though he did not capture Villa, the expedition permitted the Army to test new matériel under actual field conditions. Trucks and that new-fangled machine, the airplane, got the hardest work-out.

Pershing went to the Philippines where he served with distinction. President Theodore Roosevelt recognized his potential and promoted him from captain to brigadier general over 862 senior officers.

In May 1917, President Woodrow Wilson also showed his respect for Pershing's ability as a soldier. He appointed Pershing, then a major general, to head the American Expeditionary Force to Europe during WWI. Arriving in France with a small staff in June, Pershing was reported to have uttered the words, "Lafayette, we are here."

Fighting against pressure from the French and British, who wished to integrate the fresh but inexperienced American troops into their own forces, Pershing (promoted to full general in Octo-

ber 1917) resisted and established an independent command. In March 1918, Pershing offered Supreme Allied Commander Ferdinand Foch the temporary use of American divisions. He accepted. In May, American units were again called upon to assist at the second battle of the Marne. The Americans were now properly blooded.

In September 1918, the U.S. First Army defeated the Germans at St. Mihiel, the first entirely American victory of the war. From 26 September until the end of the war, Pershing conducted the Meuse-Argonne offensive, becoming Army Group Commander in October when the Second U.S. Army was activated.

American troops went home and in September 1919, "Black Jack" Pershing was appointed General of the Army. This was an unusual honor because the rank had previously been held only by George Washington. Pershing served as U.S. Army chief of staff from 1921 until his retirement in 1924 whereupon he became chairman of the American Battle Monuments Commission.

He died at Walter Reed Army Hospital on 15 July 1948, and rests in Arlington National Cemetery.

— Bill Brooks

island of Jolo. Gangs of dissidents under outlaw *dattos* ranged unrestrained in the back country. They eventually became bold enough to venture out to sea where they ambushed passing ships. Pershing decided to take a force to Jolo and end the Moro problem once and for all. But he had to surprise the Moros.

Before departure he publicized his intent to visit northern outposts. The news would surely reach Jolo — any time troops were loaded onto ships, word spread throughout the islands. Early on 10 June 1913 he sailed from Zamboanga accompanied only by his *aide-de-camp* 1st Lieutenant James Lawton Collins. Sailing north aboard the USS *Wright*, they changed course when out of sight of land and headed south for the port of Isabela on the island of Basilan. It was time to execute phase two of Pershing's plan for conquering the Moros.

Picking up one company of Moro Scouts, the *Wright* headed back to sea and continued southward. At 2000 hours, the mysterious little expedition drifted into Jolo harbor. Bounding ashore, Black Jack rapidly organized his troops into a strike force. He had to move fast. Informers were everywhere.

Sending two scout companies from H Troop overland, the secret armada again set sail along the dark coastline, putting in at Bunbun around 0330 on 11 June. Pershing landed his troops and lashed up a base camp. By dawn, H troop arrived from its overland trek and at 0530, 1,200 troops

trudged inland toward Bagsak Mountain, the refuge of the outlaw Sulu Moros.

For the first few miles the expedition kept to the well-worn trail from Bunbun. Unhampered by the thick jungle of *bejuco* vines, the troopers moved quickly. Shortly after 0700 Pershing's men ran into long-range harassing fire. Kicking gouts of dust off the road and snapping limbs overhead, the bullets never found their mark, but they slowed Pershing's momentum. By 0730 the lead elements could see the objective: Bagsak Mountain's cratered top, crowned with awesome *cottas* and blood-red flags. But



Insignia of the 8th Infantry Regiment, the main U.S. ground force during the Moro campaigns. They had 13 companies scattered throughout Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. Photo: Bill Brooks

surprise was on the American side and the *cottas* were manned by less than 600 Moros.

Mount Bagsak was the highest of a series of peaks rising from the rim of a horseshoe-shaped crater. The crater spanned 800 yards and was 1,000 yards deep. The heels of the shoe were defended by *cottas* Puyacabao and Bunga; they looked down on Puhagan *cotta* between them and Languasan *cotta* to the front, which guarded the road to Bunbun. Between 1,500-foot Puyacabao on the eastern rim and the principal *cotta* on Bagsak's 2,200-foot summit, Matunkup *cotta* stood atop sheer cliffs. Languasan, Puyacabao and Matunkup supported each other and had to be taken together. Without their support, Bunga and Bagsak would be isolated and easier to take.

Pershing began his move. He ordered one battalion under Major Shaw to take Languasan and another under Captain Nichol to capture Puyacabao and Matunkup. An artillery battery under Lieutenant C.F. McKinney unlimbered field pieces, pulled into cover beside the Bunbun road and began adjusting fire on Languasan. Farther east, another battery commanded by Lieutenant Thomas Van Natta opened fire on Puyacabao.

Languasan stood in front of the crater's open end. It guarded the road to Bunbun. Once it fell into American hands Bagsak's defenders would be cut off from supplies and reinforcements. Shaw's troops moved to the base of the hill and fell into a line. On his command they fixed bayonets and ad-

vanced against the sounds of ringing gongs, booming *lantaka* drums, Moro screams and cracking bullets. Resistance was lighter than expected; after capturing the first trench, Shaw realigned his formations and charged over the top. By noon Languasan was in American hands. Only two Americans died in the charge and five more were wounded.

Back at the artillery batteries, the battle was moving faster than anticipated. McKinney took his gun out of battery and raced for the captured *cotta*. The hill was so steep that the piece had to be manhandled the last 500 yards under fire from Puhagan and Puyacabao.

Trying a frontal attack, Nichols' troops were pinned down and forced to seek shelter in the rock crevices. Things were bogging down. Pershing, sensing that things were awry, dispatched Lt. Collins to Nichols' command post with instructions to take Puyacabao with the 52nd Moro Scouts and send Captain George C. Charlton's 51st Moro Scouts against Matunkup. They set off toward their distant objective.

At the top of Matunkup, the slope turned steep. Charlton's Moros climbed under sporadic rifle fire to a fingernail-size plateau about 100 feet short of their objective. From the plateau to the *cotta* was straight up — nothing to do but climb on. The defenders leaned out, firing rifles and throwing spears, barongs and rocks. Too busy to return fire, the attackers hacked toe holds in the cliff with machetes and bayonets while clinging desperately to *bejuco* vines. Hostile missiles sang past their ears and bullets smacked the rocks. Helpless on the wall, Charlton's Moro Scouts screamed profanities at the defenders and called for help from their comrades on Puyacabao.

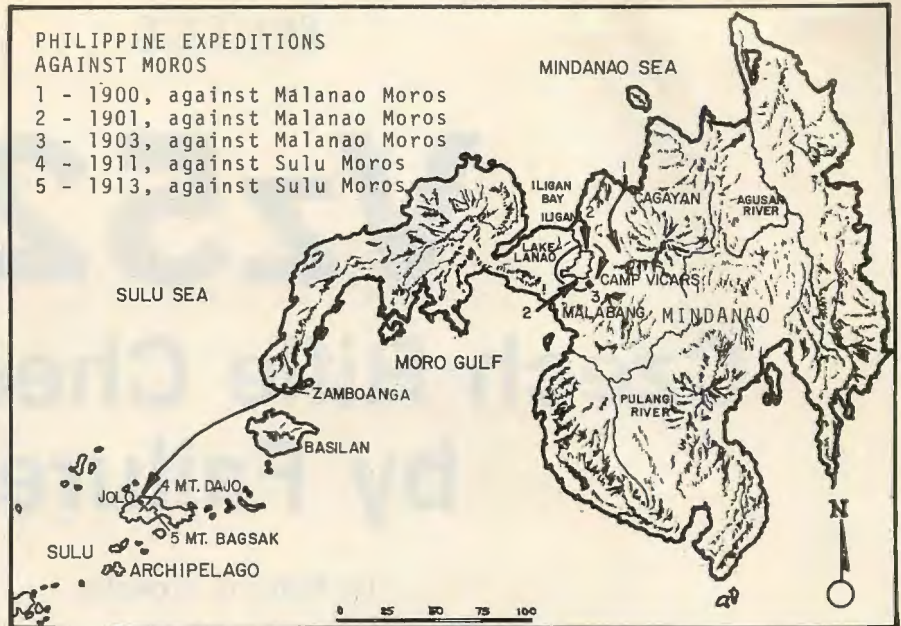
Nichols' advance on Puyacabao was also stalling out. He was aware of the horrible situation Charlton's men were in to the west so he changed tactics. Nichols ordered two squads to take up firing positions facing Matunkup. They poured accurate, sustained fire into the *cotta* while Charlton's climbers scaled the cliff. Once over the edge, they hurriedly reformed, fixed bayonets and crashed over the breastwork. There were few Moro survivors.

With Matunkup out of the way, Nichols turned his attention back to Puyacabao. A continued frontal assault against Puyacabao was futile, so Nichols sent his men between two peaks south of the *cotta*. From there he maneuvered to higher ground west of the fort and dropped swiftly upon the surprised defenders who were quickly defeated. Only five of Nichols' men were wounded.

During the afternoon Shaw's position in Languasan became the focal point of a Moro counterattack. Rifle fire rained down from Puhagan. Pershing knew Languasan was the key to the whole objective and must be held. At dusk, he ordered Lt. Van Natta's field piece hauled up to the fort and placed in battery alongside McKinney's. In the morning they would blow Puhagan to hell.

PHILIPPINE EXPEDITIONS AGAINST MOROS

- 1 - 1900, against Malanao Moros
- 2 - 1901, against Malanao Moros
- 3 - 1903, against Malanao Moros
- 4 - 1911, against Sulu Moros
- 5 - 1913, against Sulu Moros



Morning, 12 June: Pershing ordered the two scout companies that had marched overland from Jolo to move eastward and reinforce Shaw. By 0900, the 24th and 31st Companies were in place and the guns laid toward Puhagan. Pershing gave the command to reduce the *cotta* to rubble.

Inside Puhagan the world turned upside down. *Datto* Amil, an outlaw chieftain, was blown to bits by Shaw's artillery. The survivors screamed defiance, festooned themselves with weapons and, dressed in their finest clothes, paraded ceremoniously up and down the outer parapet.

"They're going to charge," Shaw screamed to his men. "They've gotten themselves all dressed up to die." And charge they did. Down they came from Puhagan, brown-skinned and barefoot, carrying blood-red battle flags and flashing weapons. On they came in waves towards Languasan's trenches.

Pershing's men stood firm, hammering away at the human wall with their .30-cal. '03 Springfield rifles. The artillery entered the fray, cutting bloody gaps in the Moro ranks. Flags crumbled, drums fell silent and men dropped, some at the very muzzles of the American guns. Survivors crawled into rock crevices where they sniped at Shaw's troops throughout the day. One unfortunate victim was Captain Nichols who was shot through the head by a Moro marksman.

Black Jack was convinced that Matunkup afforded no avenue to Bagsak so he decided to swing his forces southward and take Bunga *cotta* and use it as a base from which to take Bagsak. Bunga *cotta* stood 1,900 feet up, protected on two sides by sheer cliffs and in front by two hogback ridges. The objective was given to the 24th and 31st Scouts under Captain Patrick Moylan. He sent one company up each hogback. Luckily, no Moros barred the way; the going was easy and they reached Bunga *cotta* in no time. The order to fix bayonets came down the line. The assault on Bunga was easy; it

had few defenders and fewer rifles. By 1330, 13 June, Bunga had fallen to the attackers.

Both sides backed off the next day. Pershing used Saturday, 14 June to recon the area. It may have been in the best interests of the Moros to press Pershing's troops, robbing them of the extra day of preparations. Instead, they spent the day licking their wounds behind the walls of their *cottas*. Black Jack prepared feverishly for the coming fight.

The brief respite proved invaluable. Supplies were rounded up; the medical corps rigged up a field hospital. The men cooked their first hot meal and got the first full-night's sleep in a week.

Throughout Saturday, Lt. Collins ran a reconnaissance in force. Taking Charlton's 51st Scouts and a detachment from M Company, Collins skirted the jungle's edge and located a concealed knoll approximately 600 yards south of the *cotta*. Leaving Charlton's men to establish an attack base, he set off again toward Bagsak. Collins discovered that the only open route of attack led up a steep incline and across a narrow ridge. The enemy held all the high ground. Their trenches scarred the ridge, each earthen gash protected by a network of heavy bamboo fences.

Sunday, 15 June 1913, dawned in chilling fog that hung like a funeral shroud over Bagsak *cotta*. Van Natta's gun tore the morning air with a belch of smoke and fire. Finding his range he fired steadily, watching each orange burst through his field glasses. At 0900 Charlton's 51st Moro Scouts advanced, keeping in formation and crouching low under the supporting fire from Bunga. Fixing bayonets, the scouts charged screaming into the first trenchline, shooting, slashing and clubbing their way through. The Moros weren't going to give up that easily though. From higher ground

Continued on page 92

Vz52

Czech Rifle Checkered by Failure

by Peter G. Kokalis

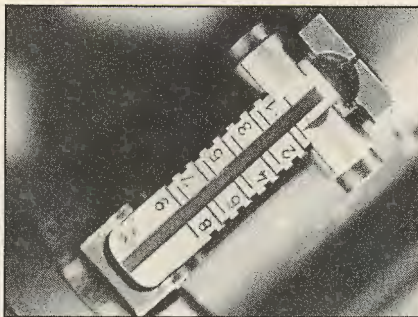


THIRD-World armies usually fight their mentors' wars with second-rate weapons. While Russians shoot at Afghans with AK-74s, the Sandinistas parade through the streets of Managua with the Czech Vz52. This system helps major military establishments justify acquiring new weapons. It has been this way forever — on both sides of the line. The Czech entry makes an interesting point of focus on the effect of the situation.

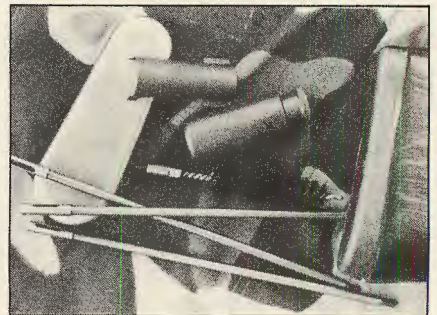
The Vz52 rifle (Vz is the abbreviation for Vzor, or Model, and 52 represents the year of standardization, 1952) was designed during that brief period after World War II before the Communists launched their campaign of political agitation, intrigue and purges that gave them complete control of the Czechoslovakian government in February 1948. The rifle, chambered for the unusual M52 cartridge, was put in production because the Czech small-arms industry had a long and proud history of success. And initially, specious demonstrations of Czech independence served Moscow's interests.

At first glance the Vz52 may appear to be nothing more than a cosmetic modification of the SKS (Ssamosarjadnyi Karabin Simonov). It is not. A blend of previously employed concepts and startling innovations, the Vz52 proved to be a complex failure. Now it interests only small-arms technologists and those poor devils of the Nicaraguan Home Guard who clutch it, waiting in terror for Freedom Fighters to strike in the still of the night.

Like the SKS, the Vz52 is not an assault rifle. Though chambered for a so-called intermediate cartridge, it does not have selective-fire capability. This semiautomatic-only carbine was intended to be mated at the



European-style open U-notch tangent rear sight is adjustable for elevation only from 100 to 900 meters in 50-meter increments.



Hidden buttstock cleaning kit which includes nylon bore/chamber brush, 3-piece rod, oil bottle/rod handle and sheet-metal scraper for interior walls of the gas sleeve.

Vz52 rifle, field-stripped.





Vz52 RIFLE SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber: M52; 7.62x45mm.
- Operation: Gas-operated with stainless-steel gas sleeve surrounding barrel. Semiautomatic only. Front-locking tilting bolt.
- Magazine: 10-rd. detachable staggered box type. Can be loaded from 5- or 10-rd. stripper clips.
- Weight, empty: 9.0 lbs.
- Overall length,
 - bayonet folded: 39.4 inches.
 - bayonet extended: 47.3 inches.
- Barrel: Four-groove with a right-hand twist of 1 turn in 12 inches.
- Barrel length: 20.6 inches.
- Sights: Front blade with removable protective hood, adjustable for windage zero. Open U-notch tangent-type rear with elevation adjustments from 100 to 900 meters in 50-meter increments. 19.2-inch sight radius.
- Accessories: Integral, folding spear-point bayonet and buttstock cleaning kit.
- Manufacturer: Ceskoslovenska Zbrojovka, Strakonice, Czechoslovakia.
- Status: 700,000 units manufactured from 1952 through 1957 only. No longer in service with the Czechoslovakian Armed Services. Currently in service with communist Third World armies from Angola to Nicaragua.

Not another SKS. The Czech Vz52, a blend of previously employed concepts and startling innovations, was a complex failure.

squad level with the even more unusual Vz52 LMG.

A gas-operated light machine gun which externally resembles the Zb/Bren series, it can be fed by either 25-rd. curved-box magazines or a 100-rd. non-disintegrating belt. Built to extremely close tolerances, the Vz52 LMG was a poor performer in mud and dust environments, as the M52 cartridge provided only marginal operating energy. Those considerations did not keep the Czechs from going ahead with the carbine.

The Vz52 rifle's method of gas operation has been derived from the German MKb42(W) of WWII. In turn patterned after the G41(W) semiauto rifle, the MKb42(W) was Waffenfabrik Walther's entry into the original assault-rifle (*sturm-gewehr*) sweepstakes. Manufactured in limited quantity only, it was disapproved in favor of the Haenel weapon which evolved into the famous MP43/44-Stg45 series of rifles.

There is a single gas vent on the barrel's underside, 9.9 inches from the breech face. After the projectile has passed this point, gas is diverted through this port into a 2.1-inch-long stainless-steel sleeve which surrounds the barrel. This sleeve acts as both gas cylinder and piston and rides over a one-inch-long stainless-steel gas stop that also surrounds and has been threaded to the barrel. The sleeve's action is short-stroke since it moves only 0.4-inch rearward to drive a 6.75-inch sheet-metal half-cylinder above the barrel, which connects the sleeve to a spring-loaded, circular machined-steel actuator, also surrounding the barrel. Two rods milled into this actuator pass through slots in the receiver on each side of the barrel to strike the bolt carrier.

Operating pressure can be adjusted by, first, loosening a jam nut in front of the gas stop with an armorer's wrench. If the gas stop is then screwed toward the breech

(again, with the armorer's wrench) the expansion chamber's volume will be reduced and the pressure will be increased to operate the system under adverse or fouled conditions. If the gas stop is screwed toward the muzzle, the expansion chamber's volume will be increased and the operating pressure will go down, reducing the violence with which the components act upon each other.

Unfortunately, there are no markings to indicate relative positions of adjustment. Manipulation is always by tedious trial and error only. To complicate matters even further, there are an infinity of positions between fully opened and fully closed. That might be acceptable, but the average grunt can't handle the concept of "infinity," which he generally believes is an obscure branch of the infantry. He needs very large, single-digit numbers deeply etched onto the gas regulator. Even then he will usually opt for the highest pressure to insure the fastest cyclic rate and/or the most certain operation, without regard to wear on the operating parts. Finally, no component of the gas system, with the exception of the sheet-metal half-cylinder, can be removed for maintenance or replacement without removal of the front-sight base which has been pinned and sweated to the barrel.

The Vz52 trigger mechanism was lifted right out of the M1 Garand, even to its method of disassembly and the safety lever in front of the trigger guard. This most widely copied of all trigger mechanisms has both a primary sear (an extension of the trigger) and a secondary sear behind it. The hammer has two bars which lie horizontally when it is cocked. The forward bar is called the primary bent and the rearward one is the secondary bent. When the hammer is cocked the primary sear engages the primary bent. When the trigger is pulled the primary sear moves forward to release the hammer and fire the cartridge. As the bolt carrier moves rearward in recoil, it rotates the hammer backward and as the trigger is still held back, the primary bent moves behind the primary sear and the secondary bent is engaged by the secondary sear and held to the rear. To discharge another round the trigger must be released so the secondary sear can be freed. As the hammer starts to rotate upward it is immediately engaged by the primary sear and the trigger must be pulled once more to fire the next cartridge. On my specimen the two-stage trigger breaks cleanly and consistently at 6.5 lbs.

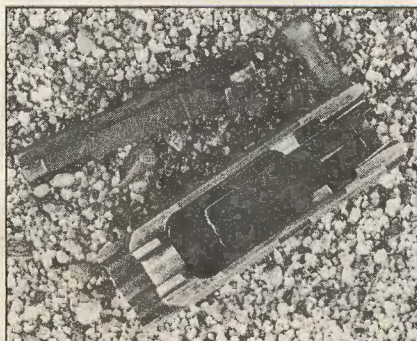
The trigger mechanism rests in four notches milled into the receiver and is retained in place by the trigger guard. When the safety lever is pushed rearward past the front of the trigger guard, its upper member rotates downward to lock the hammer and also prevent any movement of the trigger.

The receiver is a milled forging — too heavy and strong for the M52 cartridge. The milled, forged barrel extension contains the bolt's locking recesses and is welded to the bottom of the receiver body. The massive, forged bolt carrier rides in grooves milled into the receiver walls. All the major com-

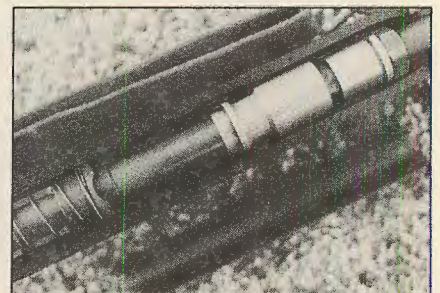


Firing the Vz52 rifle.

Vz52 bolt group: interior of bolt carrier reveals the U-shaped spring which presses down on the stirrup-shaped extractor (on top of the bolt body). Front-locking tilting bolt is unique and overly complex.



Vz52 gas system — from the right: jam nut, adjustable gas stop, gas sleeve/piston, sheet-metal half-cylinder (on the ground) which connects gas sleeve and spring-loaded actuator on the left.





ponents have a gray phosphate finish.

The bolt carrier holds the Vz52's most peculiar feature — a totally unorthodox front-locking, downward-tilting bolt. Tilted bolts are not uncommon: Zb/Bren series and the FN MAG58 machine guns all lock by bolts which tilt down and the BAR bolt tilts up. But, all these tilt at the rear.

While forward locking provides a shorter stress path for the bolt and should improve the accuracy potential, the design of an effective extractor has blocked most attempts at developing such a locking system. The Vz52 extractor is a stirrup-shaped horizontal bar on top of the bolt which moves in two vertical notches cut into the sides of the bolt body. Extractor tension comes from a U-shaped spring set into the roof of the bolt carrier. The extractor does not drop downward with the bolt.

When the hammer strikes the spring-loaded firing pin and ignition occurs, some of the propellant gases flow through the gas vent and the gas system is operated in the manner previously described. The bolt carrier moves through about 0.3-inch of free travel before the bolt lugs move out of their recesses in the barrel extension and up into the cam paths cut into the bolt carrier's interior surface. Extraction commences as the bolt begins to move rearward. Just before the bolt group comes to a full stop against the rear of the receiver, the spring-loaded ejector rod protrudes through a hole in the bolt face as its back end strikes against a stationary nub milled into the receiver's floor and the empty case is thrown up and to the left.

The recoil spring and guide rod rest in a hollow shaft drilled lengthwise into the bolt carrier. A hole in the end of the receiver retains the guide rod. It also serves to hold the heavy-gauge, stamped-sheet-metal, non-reciprocating dust cover in place. When the compressed spring drives the bolt group forward again, a round is stripped from the magazine and as the extractor hits the breech face the bolt carrier continues forward for 0.3-inch and the front of the bolt drops down into its locking recesses.

The sturdy magazine is a detachable, staggered box-type and holds 10 rounds. It can be loaded with either single cartridges or by means of 5- or 10-rod. stripper clips. A guide for the stripper clip has been milled into the bolt carrier's front surface. Everything works but special effort is required to strike the magazine hard enough to secure it in the well. Also, the flapper-type magazine catch release is short, stubby and awkward to manipulate. Despite that, the magazines fall freely away from the well when released.


A tab on the rear of the magazine follower drives a spring-loaded rod in the receiver up to hold the bolt open after the last round has been fired. The magazine and hold-open device are patterned after those found on the German G43 rifle. When a fresh magazine is inserted, the cocking handle (integral



LEFT: M52 7.62x45mm tracer cartridge (left) and the M43 7.62x39mm ball cartridge. The M52 is .33-inch longer than its ComBloc cousin and drives its 132-gr. bullet at 2,440 fps at the muzzle — 110 fps faster than the M43 round.

BELOW: Integral, folding spear-point bayonet looks fearsome, but is easily broken in combat. Background is a Czech camouflage pattern from the 1950s.





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1975



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1976



2 Publisher Robert K. Brown comes by his interest and expertise in unconventional warfare and clandestine operations honestly. You'll finally find out why in our 10TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE. Lt. Col. Brown reveals a sinister story about his tenure as a Special Forces A Team Commander in Vietnam for the first time anywhere. THIS IS MUST READING! Look for Robert K. Brown's exciting narrative

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1977



3 Peter Kokalis, SOF's Military Weapons Editor, anchors a special section of the 10th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE with an INSIGHTFUL ANALYSIS OF THE M60 MACHINE GUN, perhaps the most familiar infantry support weapon to people who have worn an American uniform. What Pete has to say about this weapon has been long overdue . . . and suppressed even longer. We'll bring you

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1978



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1979



5 We'll give you a look behind the scenes at SOF and introduce you to the people who have made the magazine what it has become over the past 10 years. You'll meet the Special Forces NCO who does SOF's exciting, dramatic art work and lay-outs. You'll get a personal glimpse of the dedicated professionals who cover the action, help train the people fighting for their freedom around the world and —

in their spare time — put out a magazine with the reach and appeal of SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

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reasons why you now . . . without delay!



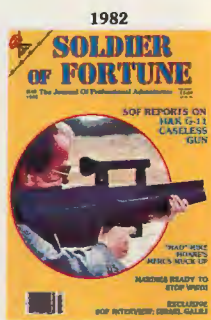
6 We'll feature a special, PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM PUBLISHER ROBERT K. BROWN in which this colorful adventurer and crusader will sum up a decade of commitment with promises and insights about the future of SOF. Executive Editor Dale Dye will review the principles which have made SOF such a phenomenon in American publishing in his popular "De-Brief" column. All of our

regular columnists will have something to say about what they've brought to the pages of SOF — and to our readers — over the years. We'll even have a "Rogue's Gallery" of all the colorful characters who have reported for SOF from all the world's hotspots.



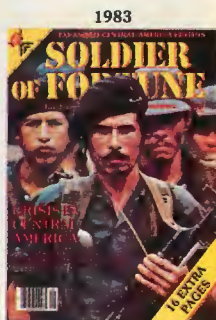
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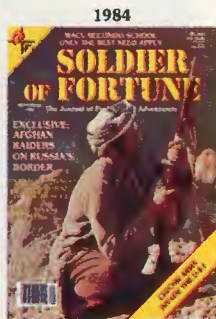


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ADVANTAGE OF THIS OFFER IS...MIDNIGHT MAY 29, 1985.



SHOT SHOW



THE civilian trade expo for guns and gear is the Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade (SHOT) Show. The National Shooting Sports Foundation has sponsored this manufacturers' and marketers' get-together since 1979, and 1985's show had lots of materiel for goers and doers. Thousands of products were exhibited for the industry and trade press at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Ga., from 15 to 17 January.

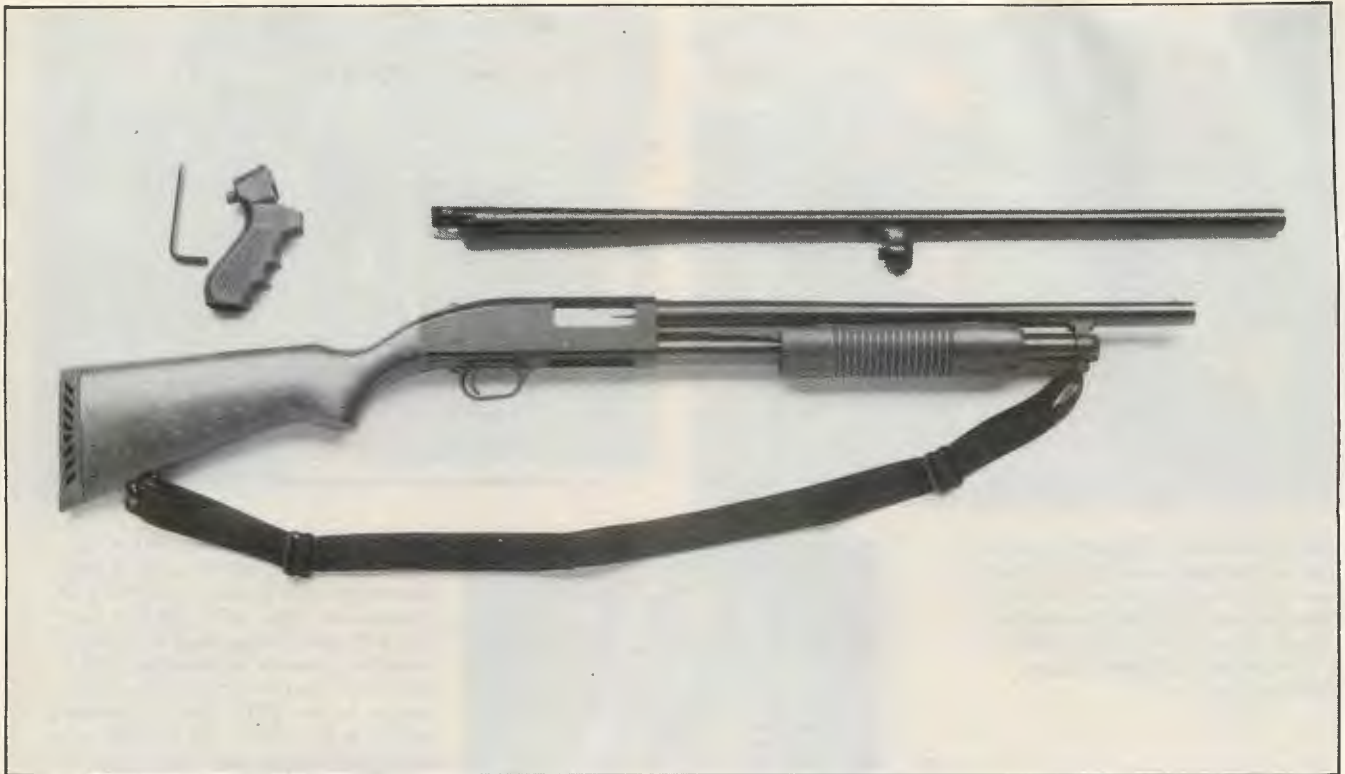
Since most SOF readers can't get into these trade exhibitions, we want you to see what the people who make, sell and publicize had to show each other. And you can expect test results on many of these products in future issues of *Soldier of Fortune*.



ABOVE RIGHT: Bianchi is an old name in the leather holster business. Recently they have gotten into the nylon game. This number is a big departure from the run-of-the-mill nylon rig though. It is designed to comfortably carry a small submachine gun like the HK MP5. Bianchi International, Dept. SOF, 100 Calle Cortez, Temecula, CA 92390.

RIGHT: The better to see you with ... Swarovski Optik of Austria developed these tough sporting binoculars for a wide range of needs including a completely waterproof model (top right) that floats. They also manufacture high-quality hunting scopes. Swarovski Optik KG, Dept. SOF, A-6060 Hall, Tirol, Austria.





ABOVE: When you don't know what shotgun to use, Mossberg might have the answer. They have a combo pack which includes an 18½-inch barrel, a 28-inch barrel, a pistol grip and a plain wood stock. Whether you need a defense scatter gun or a bird blaster, this is the one. O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc., Dept. SOF, 1985 Barrel Program, 7 Grasso Ave., North Haven, CT 06473.

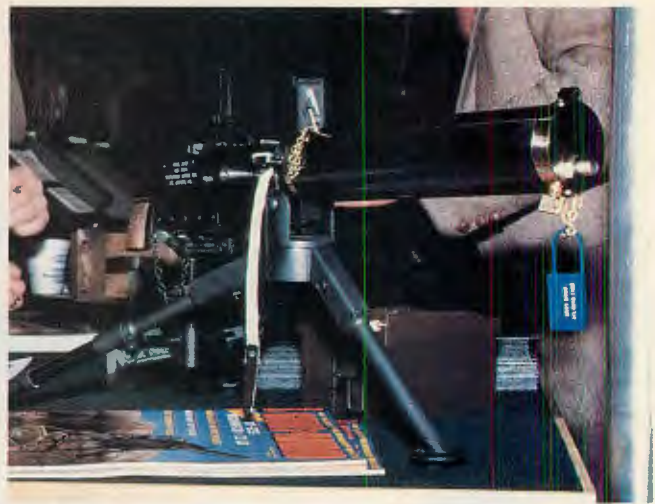
BELOW: Survival Aids has given new life to camouflage clothing. Called the Lionheart jacket, this military-style jacket employs the favorite material in mountaineering attire: Gore-Tex. The Lionheart is the first disruptive-pattern Gore-Tex jacket on the British market and has most of the features on their SAS jacket. SOF Exchange, P.O. Box 687, Boulder, CO 80301 (303) 449-3750.



LEFT: Larry Baston is proud of this new folding stock for HK91s and 93s. It's made by Choate from the wonder plastic, Zytel. L.L. Baston Co., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1995, El Dorado, AZ 71730.

BELOW: The new Foxfire crossbow has combined the advanced technology of compound bows with the reliability and handling ease of traditional crossbows. While the Foxfire is larger than ordinary crossbows, it packs more punch. Precision Shooting Equipment, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 5487, Tucson, AZ 85703.





ABOVE: Want a bullpup that doesn't take a third mortgage? This .22 LR packages Kalashnikov mechanics in FAMAS looks for \$195! Springfield Armory, Dept. SOF, 420 W. Main St., Geneseo, IL 61254. Phone: 309-944-5138.

RIGHT: What'll they think of next? Subtle gray and OD Trebark camouflage provides great protection. And it's good to know that the private sector is improving the choices in camouflage protection. Bowing Enterprises, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 6076, Arlington, VA 22206. Phone: 703-494-0991.



ABOVE: Sure, your bolt-action .22 is accurate and reliable, but is it as much fun as a Browning M1917? Of course not. This .22 is. Except for the enlarged trigger, and necessary modifications to accommodate .22 LR, it's billed as a half-scale dead ringer for the 1917. Maybe you can't afford it for \$1995, but wouldn't you like one? Tippmann Arms, Dept. SOF, 4402 New Haven Ave., Fort Wayne, IN 46803.

BELOW: Shooting sports are the big draw at the SHOT Show, but that doesn't keep the military heavyweights away. Fabrique Nationale FNCs were billed as ".223 sporters." Distributed in the United States by Gun South, Inc., Dept. FN-SOF, P.O. Box 6607, Birmingham, AL 35210. Phone: 205-592-7932.





ABOVE: *Dune* could've used the BuckMaster. Saw, rope-cutter, water-tight storage and threaded grapnel claws come standard. For the name and address of your local dealer write: Buck Knives, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1267, El Cajon, CA 92022.

BELOW: L.A.R. has managed to pack more punch into an auto-loading pistol. Chambered for the .45 Winchester Magnum, it is more powerful than the .44 Mag but with less recoil. L.A.R. Manufacturing, Inc., Dept. SOF, 4133 W. Farm Rd., West Jordan, UT 84084.



LEFT: Survival Aids' Berghaus Crusader (\$199.95) system features detachable pockets that zip together for recce pack. Distributed in the United States by Brigade Quartermaster, Dept. SOF, 266 Roswell St. Marietta, GA 30060. Phone: 404-428-1234.

BELOW: Special Forces vet Al Mar was just the man to design SF's new survival knife, according to SERE (Survival, Escape, Resistance and Evasion) program creator Lt. Col. Rowe. The \$135, 10.5-inch, camouflaged, locking folder will be available from Al Mar Knives, Dept. SOF, 5755 SW Jean Road, Suite 101, Lake Oswego, OR, 97034. Phone: 503-635-9229.





ABOVE: New products, you say? They sure look familiar. Springfield Armory is re-manufacturing its M1 Carbine (bottom) and the 1903-A3 rifle (top). But the FN-FAL? Calling it the SAR-48, Springfield has recently begun manufacturing copies of the famous military rifle from all-American parts. They are all in excellent condition and are reported to cost less than the going market price for most imported and American-made versions. Springfield Armory, Dept. SOF, 420 West Main St., Geneseo, IL 61254. Phone: 309-944-5138.



ABOVE: The Israelis have come up with a new pistol to handle the popular .357 Magnum cartridge. By changing the shell a bit, they have come up with a round that will fire from the auto-loader. Magnum Research, Dept. SOF, 2825 Anthony Lane, Minneapolis MN 55418.



RIGHT: The Aitor Jungle King takes hollow knives one step farther. In addition to the usual paraphernalia, the Jungle King also incorporates a slingshot into the handle. Saf-T-Case, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 153505, Irving, TX 75015.

BELOW: It's hard to believe this is an airgun. The new Crossman Model 84 is the first CO₂-powered pressure-regulated air rifle. Pressure can be adjusted by the shooter. Crossman Airguns, Dept. SOF, 980 Turk Hill Rd., Fairport, NY 14450.





ABOVE: Ruger has long been famous for its Mini-14 and has decided to capitalize on its success. Previously it was only chambered for the .223 round, but a new model will handle the .308. Called the XG1, it is primarily the Mini-14 built up to handle the .308. Sturm, Ruger & Co., Inc., Dept. SOF, Southport, CN 06490.



RIGHT: SOF machine-gun specialist Peter Kokalis may seem out of place with a space-age crossbow, but he could appreciate its advantages just the same. This Barnett Panzer II is about as advanced as you can get. Interchangeable stocks allow the shooter to have a standard, skeleton or pistol stock in seconds. Barnett International, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 934, Odessa, FL 33556. Phone: 813-920-2241. ✕



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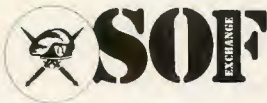


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ABANDONED IN ANGOLA

Continued from page 59

My inspection of the FNLA's operations is a dinner-theater tour. Musical demonstrations of devotion and a few villages without MPLA formations are all the FNLA has to show. Those villages are clean and the inhabitants are visibly healthier than most people in sub-Saharan Africa, but that's all there is to see.

This morning, though, we had a special performance: a tape of a Holden Roberto speech. Again, the commanders tell me they have never seen Roberto. And yet every speech mentions the president.

After the ceremonies the FNLA general staff told me this was the turnaround point. We were within 50 clicks of Luanda, and they couldn't guarantee my safety any closer. But they promised I would see still more evidence of their control over this area in my tour of villages on another route back to Kisumbu.

Of course, I've been watching my compass and I know Kisumbu isn't the way they want me to go. Moreover, it can't be more than 60 trail kilometers from where we stand. They just want to make sure I see every FNLA-controlled village. Instead of reaching Kisumbu on 6 or 7 September, they won't get me back till the ninth. Then there would be a few-day layover in Kisumbu.

I told them I had to get back. I was sick, I was missing my deadlines, and I wasn't seeing anything I hadn't seen before. Andre, my guide, told me I had to see these villages because they were important posts in the FNLA home-territory defense system. I asked him what I would see there. The answer boiled down to "more songs and speeches."

I told them that I'd go if they could show me a downed helicopter or a destroyed tank or a government outpost under seige. One more village reception would be one too many.

I came to report on a war, and I wasn't seeing it. Not only that, I wasn't seeing any capacity to wage war. Yes, it was admirable that they were hanging on out here, but I had already seen that. I wanted to go back.

Andre started to argue with me, but Villela cut him off. We would head for Kisumbu tomorrow morning and arrive the next day. The day after that — 8 September — we would depart Kisumbu for Zaire.

6 September. At 0600 the parade starts again. Infuriated, I find we are walking a small trail that heads almost due north. This trail would have saved me hundreds of clicks and several days

of suffering. But, no, we had to keep the timetable.

Who benefited from my political appearances? I certainly didn't get much in the way of news. This trek did develop a lot of detailed intelligence. But all that detail did was support what I already knew: The FNLA is not locked in combat with the central government.

Peace isn't what the FNLA wants, but it's what they've got. And scurrying about the bush, avoiding the heel of FAPLA is all the FNLA can do without outside support.

7 September. Easy walking brought us to Kisumbu by 1700 hours. Dysentery had nearly gutted me, so I was too grateful for the short way back to be mad about the runaround I got on the way out.

Kisumbu still has *funj*, vegetables, swept walks and political singalongs. Nothing's changed. Except they've got a FAPLA prisoner.

Although I've returned to Kisumbu ahead of schedule, the FNLA have arranged to have a FAPLA captive brought for me to interview. Considering the almost insurmountable language barriers between me and my escort, I don't know how I'm supposed to get anything out of him.

AK-bearing FNLA troops prodded the captive out of a hut and toward me. As I lifted my camera, he tried to dodge back into the hut.

"Hold him!" I yelled as a reflex, without stopping to think that his guards can't understand me.

The prisoner cursed me in English. I was stunned. His captors dragged him back to where I stood.

"Who are you? Where were you caught? What unit were you in? Who trained you? Where did you learn English?"

Each question drove him further into himself. He stared about the sky and at the ground as the guards poked him with their rifles. And I spoke louder and louder.

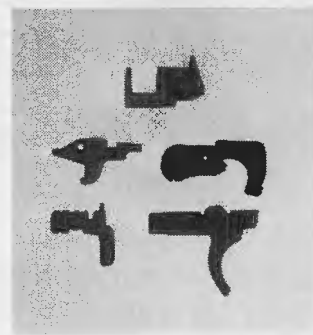
He was my first interview since I left Kinshasa. This was my first opportunity to ask a Marxist Angolan what he'd seen of the FNLA. Was there much contact? Was he captured in a firefight? What were FAPLA aims in Northern Angola?

I might as well have asked my ruck.

I wound my Nikon and started clicking. The nameless prisoner writhed and ducked and bobbed. Using a 100mm lens and slow film it was hard to keep him in focus in spite of the guards' efforts to hold him still. I was surprised they didn't beat him. It's a long way to The Hague.

After wasting half a roll of film, I quit. Several times that day I tried to talk to him. But no provocation, no temptation, no Mutt-and-Jeff worked. He just wasn't going to talk.

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All I had to report from my second visit to Kisumbu were the same happy villagers singing the same cheerful songs for Holden Roberto.

13 September. Stomach cramps kept me from straightening up on the 8th, so we didn't make the few clicks to Bessa Monteiro until the evening of the 9th.

Traffic is heavy on these trails. I'm not sure where the Angolans are going or what most of them are carrying in their bundles. But I did see one group carrying six-foot-long elephant tusks. Along this trail my escort moves with and talks to the locals. They feel safe in the coastal hills.

But they take advantage of this security to cast back and forth across the countryside to find the trails they know. I was too sick to play that game, and yesterday Andre admitted that we'd made no progress on that stage of the march. I kept showing them the compass direction, but they didn't want to trust it. So our progress is slow.

Today was especially bad. I didn't know if there were more stops for my dysentery or for the FNLA to argue about where we're going. I'm beginning to wonder if I'm going to make it back to Kinshasa.

I had no reserves left. I'd eaten too little, too irregularly, and been sick too long. I was dehydrated already, and los-

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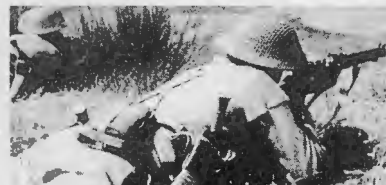
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ing fluids faster to diarrhea than I could replace them from our few canteens.

That didn't stop me from attacking Andre during an argument about what trail we should take. It was the end of my rope. I was trying to strangle him when Villela helped a black Angolan soldier pull me off him.

Villela agreed that we needed to go straight and keep moving. We were finally getting in a few good clicks when FAPLA hit us at last light.

I was walking behind Inspector General Villela when the heartstopping sound of AKs ripped the air around us. Villela crouched and muttered, "Uh-oh! FAPLA."

Villela stayed to watch after me, but everyone else had vanished. Then Villela broke for a streambed.

I hit the dirt. But that only lasted as long as it took me to learn that I'd acquired the undivided attention of a good 15 Angolan government troops. Dirt flying from bullet strikes nearly blinded me as I crawled, ran, rolled and slid into the streambed to follow Villela. But by the time I got there, they were gone.

I paused for a moment, trying to see which way they'd gone when I heard the scream of a big projectile. I hit the dirt and HE cratered the watercourse about 30 meters uphill.

For a second, I decided it was all over:

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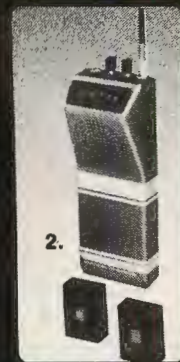
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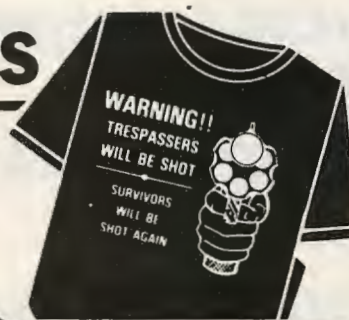
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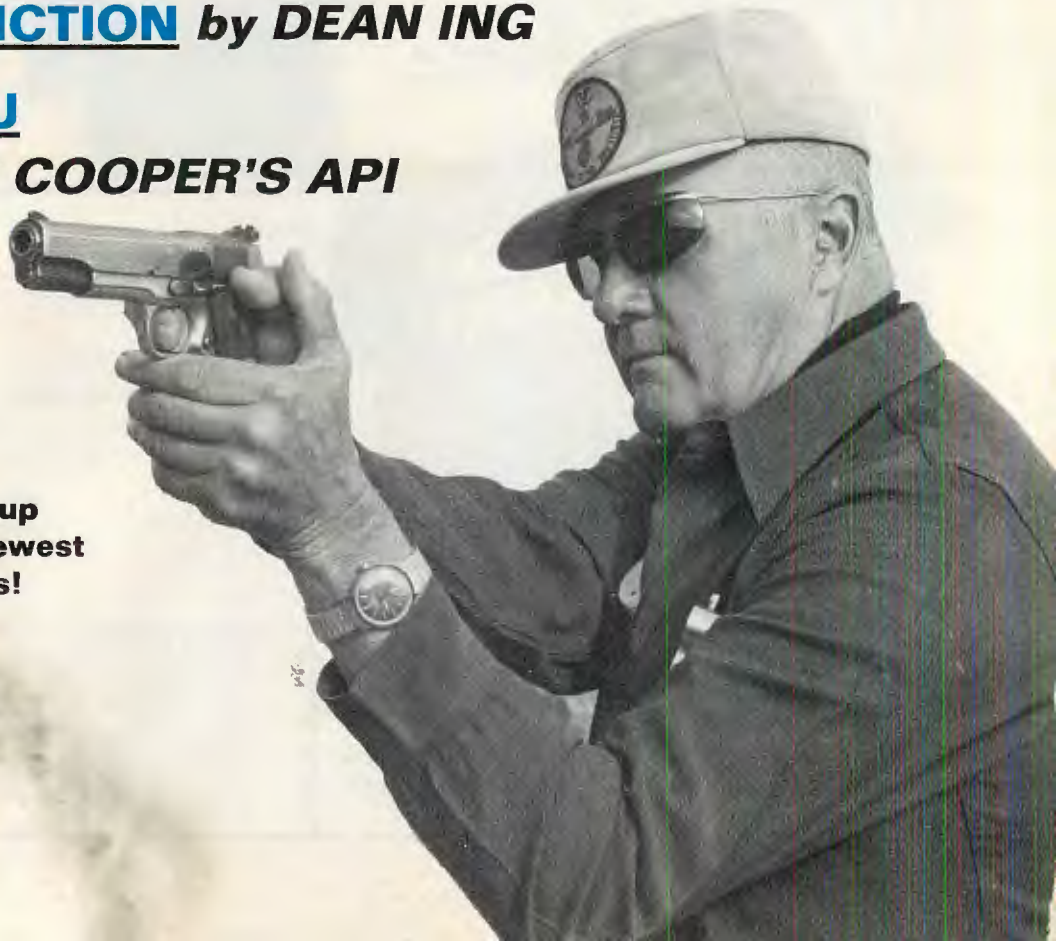
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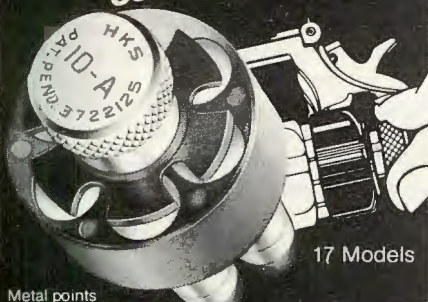
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a professional military ambush with mortars. I was dead.

But, thank God, the next round was more recognizable ... RPG-7. Bad news, but not as bad. The jackhammer thud of a DShK reminded me that this was a set ambush, and not an accidental contact. If I wanted to live, I had to escape the kill zone. I was under-cover, but they would find me here. Bullets beat the earth every way I looked. I needed to move.

Trying to think what to do, I checked my watch. It was 1713. I'd been walking down the trail at 1710. It already seemed I'd been in that gully for an hour.

I listened for return fire. Nothing. It was up to me to save myself.

They couldn't see me here, though AK and heavy machine-gun fire swept the slope behind me and ricocheted in front of me. They probably didn't even know I was there.

I started slowly crawling down the valley, working the cover as I could. At 1720 I was 10 meters away from where I'd fallen into the dry wash, tucked behind a six-inch bank. I lifted one eye above the bank to see where the enemy was, since fire had slacked. The dry ground exploded in front of me. They'd found me again.

Once more I wormed, rolled, crawled and crabwalked from cover to cover until the firing became random and finally stopped. It was 1725 hours, 15 minutes since I'd seen any of my escort. I lay still for three more minutes and began to slowly move toward the brush on the other side of the valley.

As soon as I moved, the fusillade began again. They knew right where I was. They were just keeping me pinned down while they decided what to do with me. Dark, which was gathering, seemed my only chance. I had to keep from catching a bullet until I could crawl away.

Did they think my escort was organizing a rescue? I didn't. What the hell was the FAPLA patrol doing up there? Was their maneuver element sweeping toward me as the 12.7 kept me pinned?

Shit! Was it a hunter company sent out to find me?

I'd kill myself. I just hoped this home-made 7.62 fired. I wouldn't want to have to chamber a new round and pull the trigger twice when I had to do it. There might not be time.

I waited till 1735. RPG rounds blew clods of dirt around the draw, and dirt sprinkled me from time to time. Then soldiers started trotting to the rim of the gully to yell insults.

They must have thought I was a platoon. To give the FAPLA patrol their due, it was getting dark enough so there was no way to tell. They were trying to draw us out.

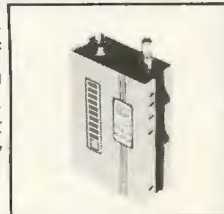
As night covered our battleground I

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started to move. Unfortunately I must have been visible. I drew fire every time I changed position. Inaccurate fire, thank God, Mikhail Kalashnikov and Angolan DIs. Nevertheless, that's little comfort while the bullets crack over your head.

At 1740 I still lay in the dirt. There was no place else to go. Then muzzle-flashes erupted from the far side of the gully.

I figured they had me surrounded. But FAPLA redirected its fire toward the new activity, and I didn't waste any time scurrying up the slope and into the brush. After 100 meters, I stopped to look and listen. FAPLA was shooting more, but they were just hosing the slope and the gully. They didn't have a clue where I was. It was 1750, dead dark, and I was alive. Now I had to find my rescuers.

A quiet whistle was answered with whispers, and I slowly moved toward the noise, careful not to rustle the underbrush. I found Villela 20 meters up the slope, where he squatted with a black named Chivenda. I was never so happy to see other humans.

We whispered and signed to each other and trotted off to the rendezvous. When we got there our entourage was half its original size. Nobody knew what happened to the rest.

We sat on the hillside, catching our breath. Villela explained that they'd waited for me, knowing they didn't have the firepower for a rescue. But as AKs blazed and RPGs pocked the gully where they'd left me, they decided to stage a diversion. Villela collected everybody's ammo, almost filled two mags and headed back with Chivenda.

I thanked them sincerely.

But I still wished they would be more careful. We didn't have to walk into that ambush. And despite our narrow escape from death, our resting place is less than 700 meters from the ambush, in plain sight of the FAPLA troops who were still beating the bush and shooting at noises.

We walked another four clicks, and camped — with fires — within 5,000 yards of the FAPLA camp. And still no guards were posted. I couldn't believe it.

14 September. That was supposed to be my last day in the bush. At midday we reached the Mpozo River. As we uncovered the hidden dugout we heard nearby shouts. All 21 missing FNLA troops had arrived at the crossing, and the reunion was joyous and enthusiastic.

We crossed the Mpozo, and walked another three hours. At 1500 hours we made an early camp as Andre walked on to arrange for transportation when we crossed back into Zaire. He failed to return, but we thought nothing of it, and assumed he had things under control and was waiting for us.

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15 September. On rising I saw no preparations for departure and asked when we were leaving. I was told the border was very close, and we wouldn't leave till late afternoon.

Another long, dull, hot, dry, hungry, fly-blown day. But my morale was sky-high. I was going to escape from Angola.

At 1730 we saddled up and walked. My 70-pound Bergen was weightless. My belly hardly hurt. All I could think of was food, bath and a bed. I supposed I could have enjoyed seeing Andre . . . if he brought a truck.

We were over the border and standing on a road inside Zaire at 2000 hours. I couldn't decide if I was going to spend a week eating and sleeping in a bathtub, or bathe and then eat and sleep in a soft bed with blankets. Maybe I would just eat for two days, and then decide what to do next. My culinary fantasies revolved around different kinds of fresh bread.

I was waiting for the most wonderful truck in the world to take me to eat hot bread. This might be the finest evening of my life.

Instead, we sat for hours at the side of an empty road that ran through the jungle. Villela thought it a bad idea to wait there for light. We would return to our same waterless, foodless camp.

16 September. I'd had it. I was feverish and my heart was beating irregularly from a combination of dehydration and salt loss. I was nauseated, dizzy, weak and losing my grip. I didn't like being starved, infected by bad water, dragged aimlessly around the country or being shot at without any chance of defending myself. I told Villela that if I didn't get back to Kinshasa that day, there would be no story.

That wasn't just blackmail. If I died, there wouldn't be anybody to write it. I doubted my capacity to escape another ambush, and I knew I was dangerously dehydrated.

They all conferred, and a messenger went across into Zaire. He returned four hours later. When Villela had debriefed him, I was told we would return to the road at 2000 hours.

I don't remember any of the walk. Stumbling through the dark with the fever roaring in my ears, it was all I could do to keep sight of Villela's back. I couldn't fall . . . I had to get back that night.

At 2020 hours, my pack and I were bouncing down the road in a taxi brought from Kinshasa. An old FNLA commandant had come in the taxi to greet me, but he had to talk to the driver on the 12-hour drive to Kinshasa.

I was asleep. ✕

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BLACKJACK PERSHING
Continued from page 67

they poured a withering fire onto Charlton's men. Unable to take cover, the attack bogged down and casualties mounted.

Pershing was quick to recognize the predicament. Throwing caution to the wind, he ordered a contingent from M Company into battle. But he wasn't asking them to do something he wouldn't do himself. Up and down the line of scouts he strode, encouraging, calming, advising and seemingly impervious to the fire he was drawing from the fort.

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The scouts raced through the field of fire screaming while the pinned-down Americans crashed through the bamboo fence to their right. Under a deadly hail of bullets and rocks, they demolished the fence and scattered the defenders. The Moros fell back to the last trench, pursued by khaki-clad demons with bloody bayonets, Pershing in the vanguard. Gathered around their battle flags, the Moro remnants were overrun. By 1700 Bagsak was in American hands.

Pershing's victory at Bagsak Mountain ended the Moro Rebellion. The Sulu Moros lost between 200 and 300 dead and wounded; Pershing guessed that another 200 were captured or routed. American losses for the five-day campaign were 15 dead, 32 wounded. Not a bad tally considering the nature of the battle.

All was not so rosy on the home front. Pershing suffered considerable criticism in the American press. Reporters came from Manila to interview "maimed noncombatants." Pershing was accused of "butchery" and the War Department was pressured into making an inquiry which became fertile ground for anti-colonialist reporters. Every attempt was made to invent a massacre. But the horror stories collapsed and Pershing became the most respected and best-loved American involved in Moro affairs. He was made a *datto* and later a sultan, honors never before or since given to an infidel.

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NO WAR IN QUI NHON
Continued from page 63

watch — 0630. His head was throbbing with the combined effect of concussion and what must have been nine gallons of beer.

"Goooooooooooo morning, Vietnam." It was time to fly. As he stood on the curb waiting to hail a pedicab, he remembered

the sad story the girl had told him about the GI who had promised to return for her eight months ago and about the family that had been killed by the VC, forcing her into hooking to support herself.

"Well, John, you were wrong. There *is* a fucking war in Qui Nhon."

As he approached the ramp, John saw that his crewchief was already pre-flighting their new helo. When he got into earshot the maintenance routine stopped.

"Hey, there's a guy over there that's been waiting for you. He says he's some sort of instructor pilot."

John walked around the nose of the bird to find an officer staring out at the runway traffic. The man turned, smiled and stuck out his hand.

"I'm George Hines, the Standardization Instructor Pilot for the 17th Group. I've got to give you a quick checkout before you fly the Secretary of the Army today."

That seemed odd given John's over-filled logbook. "What sort of checkout are you talking about?"

"Oh, the standard sort of thing — auto-rotations, emergency procedures and the like."

John's jaw muscles bunched visibly and his crewchief jumped down off the aircraft to prevent trouble between the two officers if he could.

"OK. I just want to make sure I've got this straight now. You mean that I'm good enough to fly regular soldiers but I can't fly



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the Secretary of the Army without a check-ride?"

The instructor pilot opened his mouth to answer but the crewchief chimed in to cut him off. "Sir, if we're good enough to pick up Team Ohio on strings over the fence while we're still getting drilled and get 'em all back, then we oughta be good enough to fly somebody's damn secretary!"

John was pleased. "You tell 'em, Bob."

The instructor pilot was neither impressed nor cooperative. "Look: we can do this the hard way or the easy way, but you're still going to take the checkride. I'll call the Group Commander, who will probably personally call your Company Commander to find out what your problem is."

They took off north out of Qui Nhon.

The instructor pilot was flying from the right seat and John was in the left.

"I'm going to demonstrate a precision autorotation for you first," the instructor pilot said. "Do you see that sandbar up ahead of that stream?"

"Yes," John replied. It was bounded by bends in the river and trees so that the area was quite small.

"Well, I'm going to put it in there for you and then let you do one." The instructor

pilot cut the throttle and entered autorotation.

"Rotor in the green." John locked his shoulder harness as the aircraft fell toward the hole. It was not the kind of area he would have chosen to practice a potentially dangerous maneuver.

Just above the trees the instructor pilot slowed the aircraft and at 15 feet started to pull the collective to get more pitch on the blades and cushion the landing.

John was worried. They made the sandbar but with too much forward speed. Soft-field touchdowns should be as near to ground speed as possible. John thought the instructor needed a few lessons himself. As they touched down on the sand the right skid started to dig in and the aircraft began to tip.

"Hold on!" John yelled over the intercom and made a grab for the controls. He had to get the toe of the right skid out of the sand before they went over. As soon as he got on the controls he knew by their position that the situation was beyond recovery. Collective pitch was full up and the stick was full left rear. They were out of pitch, altitude and ideas all at the same time.

"You bastard!" John shouted as they lost the second aircraft in as many days.

People and equipment flew everywhere as the helicopter snapped over and began to disassemble on the sand outside Qui Nhon. Dust and sand filled the cockpit.

"Gotta get to Bob and Hector. We're full of fuel! Oh, shit! We're full of fuel. We gotta get out of here!"

The aircraft was on its side and John could barely see something above his head. He stared at it for a few seconds before realizing that it was the sole of a boot. He reached up with his right hand to find a leg attached. It had to belong to the instructor pilot.

"You bastard! You're standing on my fucking head!" He pinched and twisted a handful of calf muscle and the pace of the evacuation quickened.

Bob and Hector pulled John up and out, over the co-pilot seat. The crewchief grabbed the one M60 they could reach and John switched on his survival radio beeper. They moved to the opposite end of the sandbar up under the trees to wait. The instructor pilot was trying unsuccessfully to steady his hand and light a cigarette. John shouted over his shoulder as his crew moved toward cover.

"Say, I've just got one question for you. How many more of these do we have to do before we're checked out? They're a little hard on a body."

John forced his eyes to focus on the wreckage of his helicopter. He'd been in Vietnam a long time and knew what the drill would be now. It would take a day or so to get it policed up and to answer the accident board's questions. The instructor pilot was through harrasing combat crews. That was justice and the delays didn't bother John.

There was a war right here in Qui Nhon and one of its victims needed a little cheering up. ☒

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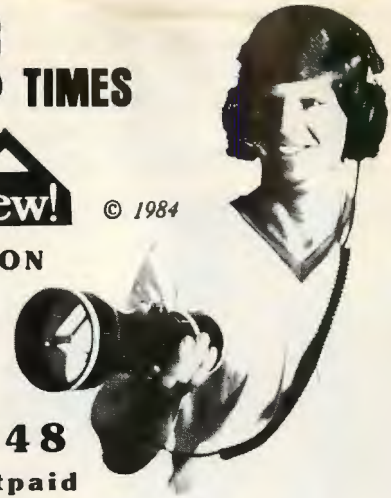
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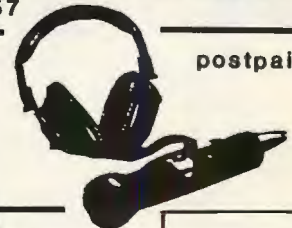
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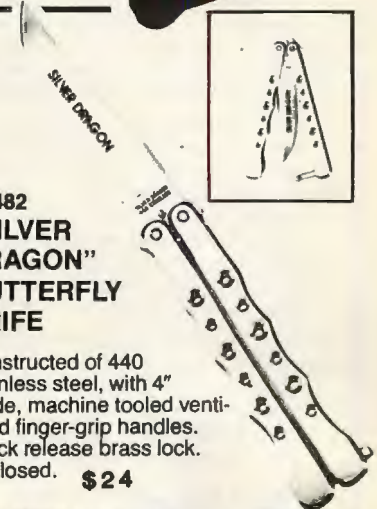
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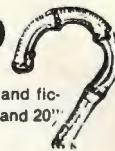


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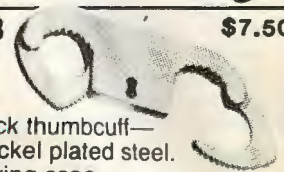
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Vz52

Continued from page 71

with the bolt carrier) must be retracted slightly to release the hold-open device. It should then be allowed to travel forward without restriction to chamber a round.

All this sits within a typical birch ComBloc stock of the usual orange-crate quality, stained and varnished to appear walnut. However, the receiver butts against a substantial recoil lug and cross bolt. The web sling is attached to the stock's left side — at the butt end — by a bar fastened to an inlet and at the front by a hook little better than a bent coat hanger affixed to a rigid swivel. It ain't what it should be, but it'll do.

Finger grooves are cut into the forearm portion of the stock. The right side groove is only 2.5 inches long to accommodate the permanently attached bayonet which folds into a groove on this side. This spring-loaded, spear-point appendage is 11 inches long and quite fearsome-looking, but just as easy to break off as those on the Japanese Type 44 Cavalry Carbine, the Russian M1944 Mosin-Nagant Carbine and SKS.

The unchecked, stamped-sheet-metal buttplate looks conventional but serves as a cover for the cleaning kit hidden beneath it. The tools include a three-piece rod, nylon bore/chamber brush, oil can/rod handle and a sheet-metal scraper to remove carbon deposits from the inside surface of the gas sleeve.

Vz52 rifle sights are of the European style with a 19.2-inch sight radius. The rear sight is an open U-notch tangent adjustable for elevation only from 100 to 900 meters. This 800-1,000-meter fantasy persists to this day on the Kalashnikov series, chambered for the even less potent M43 cartridge. The blade front sight is mounted in a dovetail on the front-sight base and can be tapped horizontally for windage zero. The removable front sight hood also acts as a ratchet lock for the muzzle nut which protects threads apparently used to attach a grenade-launching apparatus.

This well-built elaborate package weighs in at 9 lbs., empty . . . far too heavy. The four-groove barrel has a right-hand twist of one turn in 12 inches and is 20.6 inches long. The overall length of the rifle with the bayonet folded is 39.4 inches.

Disassembly of the Vz52 is rather straightforward, once a few idiosyncrasies are mastered. First remove the magazine and retract the bolt carrier to make certain the chamber is empty. After the bolt carrier has been allowed to return home under control, slide the dust cover (which is notched for this purpose) forward until it clears its guide rails at the rear of the receiver. Lift it up and draw it back slowly. The recoil spring will jump out of its hole in the bolt carrier and fall away from the dust cover along with the guide rod. Slide the bolt carrier to the rear and rotate it to the right until it is free of the receiver body. Push the bolt backward, let it drop and then pull it

forward and out of the bolt carrier.

Next, press in on the two retaining clips on either side at the rear of the upper hand-guard and lift it off. With the nose of a bullet, press inward on the spring-loaded catch exposed through a hole in the bayonet and slide the barrel band forward. The barreled action and trigger group can now be lifted out of the stock.

With the hammer cocked and the safety on, pry the trigger guard away from its retaining nub and rotate it away from the housing. Slide the trigger group forward and away from the receiver body. Slide the sheet-metal half-cylinder toward the chamber and lift it off the barrel. This will permit you to slide the gas sleeve down and away from the gas stop. The special tool may now be inserted to scrape the inside walls of the gas sleeve. No further disassembly is required.

Do not lubricate the stainless-steel components of the gas system after removing the carbon deposits. Reassemble in the reverse order.

Make certain the notch at the rear of the receiver is properly inserted onto the recoil lug. The catch must again be depressed during reassembly of the barrel band. The bolt body must be completely up and forward in the bolt carrier before placing this group back into the receiver. Insert the front end of the recoil spring into its hole in the bolt carrier and compress the remainder on the guide rod. Insert the guide rod into the bolt carrier and place the end of it against the rear receiver wall, but not into its retaining hole. Place the dust cover's open notch over the end of the guide rod and slide the spring, rod and cover forward until the dust cover can be set into its guide rails. Let the dust cover travel rearward under control.

Only two weapons (the Vz52 rifle and LMG) were ever chambered for the M52 7.62x45mm cartridge. All the specimens I have examined are headstamped with the arsenal code 'bxn' and dated in the 1950s. This marking, introduced in 1952, should not be confused with the German World War II code of the same letters. Packaging is in unmarked 15-rd. cardboard boxes, 1,000 rds. to a case. The cartridge was manufactured only in Czechoslovakia.

The M52 cartridge was clearly inspired by the German 7.92x33mm intermediate assault-rifle cartridge. Its early precursor was the little-known Z49 cartridge with a caliber of 7.5mm. Overall length of the M52 round is 2.35 inches (59.7mm). Case length is 1.76 inches (45mm). In overall length it is .33 inch (8.4mm) longer than the ComBloc 7.62x39mm round. The case is green-lacquered steel and corrosive Berdan primed. The ball projectile weighs 132 grains and is thus about 10 grains heavier than the nominal 122.5-gr. 7.62x39mm bullet. It has a full metal jacket (FMJ), either copper or chrome colored. Bullet diameter is .310 inch and the projectile can be used to reload M43 ammunition which specifies a bullet diameter of .311 inch. Typical ComBloc green is the color of the trace.

Propellant is an extruded short tubular IMR type. The average charge weight is 27 grains — two grains more than the M43 round. It can be used to reload either 7.92mm Kurz or 7.62x39mm ammunition, but charge weights must be kept on the conservative side as this is a relatively fast-burning powder (comparable to IMR 4227 in burning rate).

At 2,440 fps the average muzzle velocity is 110 fps faster than the M43 round (2,330 fps). It offers a marginal improvement over the 7.62x39mm round with a slightly greater effective range. However, performance difference was not great enough to warrant the logistic incompatibility with other ComBloc nations and in 1957 it was dropped and final versions of the Vz52 rifle were chambered for the M43 cartridge. The nomenclature was changed to Vz52/57, but few rifles of this type were produced since the Vz58 assault rifle (bearing but superficial resemblance to the Kalashnikov series) was introduced in 1958.

I believe that almost 700,000 Vz52 rifles were produced between 1952 and 1957. While many will remain incredulous of this figure, the Ceskoslovenska Zbrojovka arsenal in Strakonice has been a major small-arms producer for decades, easily capable of producing more than 400 units per day. Furthermore, a detailed examination of serial numbers indicates an alphabet-letter prefix was used and changed after every 99,999 rifles. The serial-number sequence was then repeated with the changed letter code. Rifles manufactured in early 1957 were already in the 'H' sequence.

This rifle is now in the hands of communist terrorists throughout the world. A total of 1,120 Vz52 rifles were captured in Grenada. It remains in use from Angola to Nicaragua. Yet less than several dozen reside in U.S. collections and excellent examples sell for \$1,200 or more. In fact, so inconsequential is the domestic demand for ammunition in caliber 7.62x45mm that five years ago a million rounds were cleverly converted to 7.62x39mm by resizing and trimming the cases. They were sold on the U.S. market. As a consequence, M52 ammunition is now difficult to obtain here, although hundreds of millions of rounds still lie in communist warehouses.

I have, to date, diminished the world inventory of M52 ammunition by a mere 500 rounds. Yet I can safely report that the Vz52 rifle is indeed a clumsy and burdensome piece. I would never voluntarily take it into battle.

The primers are beginning to go sour on my small hoard of "bxn 53" headstamped ammo, and ejection, which is always up (the entire action is exposed when the bolt carrier travels rearward) and to the left, varies in force from your shirt pocket to 10 feet. But I have never experienced a stoppage of any type and — complex though it is — all the components seem to move in the right direction at the proper time. I have never been able to induce the overheating implied by others.

Although it fires a more potent round than the 7.62x39mm cartridge, felt recoil in the Vz52 amounts to little more than a gentle shove — a function of the rifle's 9 lb. mass and the gas system which wraps around the barrel's axis of thrust and eliminates the usual jerking motion associated with offset-recoiling forces. Accuracy potential is typical ComBloc — about 4-5 MOA on a good day and I guess they feel that's close enough for government work, if not for Camp Perry. Hit probability is adequate, but uninspiring.

Czechoslovakia's military-small-arms industry has always, without conscious effort, emulated the advice of Teddy Roosevelt, who said, "Far better it is to dare

mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who never enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in that gray twilight that knows not victory or defeat."

Czech design teams have produced the illustrious Zb series of light machine guns, the excellent Model 58 assault rifle, the superb Cz75 pistol, the Models 23 and 25 submachine guns (whose telescoping bolt system has been much copied) and the infamous and sinister Model 61 Skorpion SMG. But the oversized, overbuilt and overweight Vz52 rifle must join the boneyard that includes the Model 38 (at 2 lbs. it was the world's largest .380 ACP)

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and Model 52 (which employed the roller-locking mechanism of the German MG-42 machine gun!) pistols.

I feel buoyant and refreshed to review a ComBloc small-arms fiasco for a change. May all the Sandinista firing pins shatter on dead primers. ✕

SNOW SOLO

Continued from page 45

swim and a few minutes lying in the sun, we dropped into the swamp again. And this time, we were ready to take on the goo. In this completely different climate, I felt that way again.

Morning faded into a cloudy noon. Trees got smaller, rarer, and twisted as if trying to crawl under a rock to get out of the wind. Climbing steadily toward the sky, I again became weary of this adventure.

Gone were the light-hearted feelings of that morning. Point elements of cloud raced overhead, their wispy forms whipped into ever-changing shapes at the whim of the merciless wind. On their heels plodded an army of somber black air that looked every bit as solid as a

stone wall. Another storm was marching toward me. Yesterday's gale would seem like spring, compared to this bruiser. Should I call this whole thing off and scurry for the safety of the lowlands?

No way. That barren shrouded hump of windblown broken rock was my goal and I intended to make it. The last trees lay behind me now, their stoic silhouettes standing solid against the rising storm. Taking off the clothes-laden pack, I piled on the layers again. I needed all the warmth I could get.

Layers are to mountaineering what rifles are to soldiers. Without them, both would be in trouble. Layers of clothes allow a controlled system of insulation and ventilation. As the temperature drops, the layers start going on. As it rises, just peel off some clothes. It's as important that you don't sweat too much as it is that you keep warm. Sweat will cool and freeze when the level of exertion drops off. And that will mean trouble.

I remembered that rule as the climb stiffened. Moving along the wind-wracked ridge that led to the top, I felt the sweat start to flow. Hard to believe I could sweat in this frozen hurricane. But it was happening. To fight the problem, I stopped every 100 meters or so until I started to cool down. Even in the 60-below-zero wind chill, I felt toasty.

Combat training had challenged me the same way, so I had an idea of how to

handle it. Movement had to be tailored to weather and terrain. In humid heat, it is wise to keep cool — in winter, you modify that a bit. Just don't get too hot.

The mountain's spine grew rocky and barren. Skis were worthless here. Taking them off, I jammed them into the ski slots on my pack. This was as good a spot for a rest as any, I thought, scanning the barren skeleton that I had mounted. Chopping blocks of wind-blown, crusty snow, I stood them on end so they would act as a wind screen. Rummaging through the pack, I laughed to myself. Looking like a disfigured jaw barricaded with crooked teeth, that puny wall of snow was now the most protection this mountain had to offer.

I hunkered down behind it and pulled out the space blanket. Wrapped in its silvered surface, I felt pretty good. As the wind screamed and swirled in its furious dance, I spied the neck of a water bottle peering from my pack. Strange, all morning I hadn't once thought about taking a pull on the water jug. That's dangerous.

"Drink whether you're thirsty or not." Those words of wisdom rolled from the honeyed tongues of NCOs in their quest to teach us "scumbags" how to survive the ordeal of heat and humidity in the hellhole outside Bragg. There, you were always thirsty so you always drank. Here, it was different. The last thing I wanted was cold water trickling down my cold throat. But it was just as important that I keep from becoming dehydrated. I took a cold swig and could immediately tell that I was indeed thirsty.

Back to the trail. I left the wretched little wind break and followed my feet. The altitude was starting to take its toll. My heart pounded in my chest and breath came in short spasms. But I could see the summit looming through the blowing snow. I stopped to take a photo, but the view through the camera was gray mush. No point.

Altitude can throw some strange curves at climbers. Headaches are among the worst. As the ridge fell away behind me, the inside of my skull started to pound in rhythm with my footsteps. Time for another rest. Glancing up at the summit was no consolation. It looked as distant as it had hours ago. Distances have a way of becoming blurred in the treeless mountains because there are no reference points to gauge on. If I didn't want to become disillusioned with this whole trip, I needed a diversion. Think of something pleasant, I told myself.

I trudged onward and upward. As the monotonous spine of this wretched ridge passed slowly beneath my feet, visions of a movie I had seen a few nights ago rolled through my head over and over again. *Blame it on Rio* had been playing and all I could see were warm beaches and people wearing very



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few clothes. At least that would keep my mind occupied.

Without warning or fanfare, I reached the top. Plopping down on my pack, I caught my breath. There was no elation. No sense of victory. Only weariness. Why do people do this sort of thing? As I sat atop those snow-sprinkled rocks, I knew the answer.

It was a challenge which had been accepted and completed. The feeling of accomplishment would hit home later. Just give it some time.

Remember Basic? Countless drill sergeants had hammered home that same message. The harder it is to achieve your goal, the sweeter the taste of victory. If life was miserable, you would somehow be a better person because of it. For me though, all I wanted was off this mountain.

The south side of Mt. Sniktau was covered in a thick cowl of windblown crust. Skis were a must for the descent. Strapping them to my feet again, I cautiously wound around the cornice. Windblown snow can make life difficult for skiers. The flats of skis ride over it fine, but as soon as you set an edge, it's down on your ass. And I'd had enough of snow. Besides, that storm was picking up in fury and 80 to 100 degrees below zero was not my idea of a good time.

A few hundred meters down the hill the slope eased off and the crust turned to hardpack. Ahead of me I could see the trees, their rigid forms beckoning me to safety. Carving steep curves in the slope, I made for them. My mood lifted as the altitude fell away. I had made it. It was over.

In the trees again. What a feeling. Safety, cover, shelter from the elements. What more could I ask for? As I approached Arapahoe ski area, the temperature felt downright warm. Compared to the mountain top, it probably was. This was a normal forest. No blowing snow and icy rocks. I guess it's all relative. But as this lesson in winter realities came to a close, I found that I had learned something valuable.

Waiting by the side of the road to hitch a ride back over the pass, I pondered it. Then the realization hit me like an avalanche of wet snow. All you have to do to survive in this wildly unpredictable environment is live *with* it. Don't fight it or you are bound to lose.

Not exactly an original idea — countless soldiers and mountaineers before me came to that same profound conclusion — but when you see the answer face to face, it takes on a whole new meaning. No matter what the climate, just roll with its punches. There is no difference between environments. While each one presents its own peculiar set of obstacles, they can all be handled in the same way: *use* your surroundings to make life more comfortable no matter where you are.

My fear and loathing of winter vanished like snow in springtime. ✕

FULL AUTO

Continued from page 16

loaded steel block limits its travel. This mechanical firing-pin stop, also located in the slide, is activated by a coil spring and deactivated at the last moment of trigger travel by the trigger bar and a lever assembly. It ensures that the pistol cannot fire unless the trigger is pulled.

The 15-round magazine has a release button which is properly located to the rear of the trigger guard. It may be reversed for either right- or left-handed shooters. The extractor also serves as a gratuitous loaded-chamber indicator.

The fixed square-notch rear sight and front blade have fluorescent dots which enhance target acquisition in subdued-light environments.

During SOF's test and evaluation of the 92SB (See SOF, November '82) it was determined that the handling characteristics are superb with high hit probability and accuracy potential. The grip-to-frame angle and balance are excellent. Single-action second rounds consistently print close to the double-action first round.

Seven modifications changed the 92SB into the 92SB-F. The trigger guard has been squared off and grooved. I think this was an unnecessary change, not required when a correct two-handed hold is employed. The grip frame has been slightly flared at the front bottom to enhance pointability and control during firing. The magazine floorplate has been thickened and enlarged. The plastic grip panels have now been molded with a modest thumb rest. The sights have a slightly higher relief. The lanyard ring has been pivoted 90 degrees and the exterior finish has been altered from glossy blue-black to a non-glare sand-blasted matte.

Field-stripping and reassembly remain effortless with Beretta's novel disassembly latch. The weight and dimensions also remain the same. The barrel length is 4.92 inches, overall length is 8.54 inches and the weight with a fully loaded magazine is 40.9 oz. — all under the JSSAP specifications. The lightweight aluminum-alloy frame has survived Beretta tests of more than 30,000 rounds.

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produce a total of 315,930 units. The contract calls for 52,930 pistols of Italian manufacture to be produced the first year, followed by 65,750 units the second year with U.S. assembly and testing and parts made in Italy. During the final three years of the contract, all parts, assembly and testing will be done in the U.S.

The Navy has allocated \$400,000 from Fiscal Year 1984 for 1,100 pistols (\$363 each). For FY 1985 the Army has allocated \$10 million for 30,000 pistols (\$333 each), the Air Force \$3.4 million for 11,500 pistols (\$295 each) and the Marine Corps \$3.2 million for 14,430 pistols (\$221 each). Why do

the Marines always get everything cheaper?

The entire JSSAP funding for the XM9 testing, evaluation and selection was drawn from FY 1982 defense appropriations in the amount of \$1.9 million. All this to tell us what we all knew after the original USAF Eglin trials? Although of far lower priority than rifles and machine guns, the Beretta 92SB-F pistol will be well received by those troops authorized issue of the new pistol (and a few that aren't). It should serve with as much distinction as its fabled predecessor, the M1911A1. Although delayed somewhat by another bureaucratic boon-

doggle, Columbus has landed on our shores once more in the guise of Pietro Beretta. This admirable choice is marred only by JSSAP's total failure to conform with two of its stated goals: reduce development costs and time and improve the acquisition system. As I predicted, a few of the other candidates have proven to be sore losers. They're suing the government. ✖

DE-BRIEF

Continued from page 2

during national or state emergencies, and even defense of their home territory in the event some organized bad guys from south of our borders should decide to re-stage the Battle of the Alamo. The TSG says that's unrealistic and unnecessary. They ought to take a student deferment from their so-called military obligations and study a little history.

We applaud the volunteer efforts of the 105th Military Police Battalion, Texas State Guard and similar programs which are drawing fire in 15 other state militias throughout America. Our cheers may fall on deaf ears. Some self-serving bureaucrats in those states that have authorized militias are rapidly rethinking the decision for fear that they've created a situation in which real guns will be in the hands of trained people, the tranquility of the countryside may be disturbed on the odd weekend and (heaven forbid) we might wind up with a genuine militia to do what must be done right here at home in an emergency which requires the use of force.

Paul Revere should be resurrected to ride again with a warning to the people. Unless we make our opinions known to the appropriate state authorities, that lilting echo you hear across the land may be Taps for yet another time-tested and honorable American tradition. ✖

OPERATION "SLYFOX"

Continued from page 35

our CIA-supplied maps of the area which showed the current locations of Israeli occupation forces near where we would be operating. But since this was supposed to simulate reality, we allowed them only three days to prepare for the mission. They made it.

It was time for the command brief-back session with their highest military leaders.

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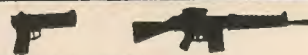
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The purpose of a brief-back is to allow the commander to be sure that the advisory team he is inserting completely understands the mission and has a good plan for getting it accomplished. Usually just senior military officers and a few political advisers attend these meetings. But because these joint American-Jordanian operations were critical to strategic stability in the area, we were informed that His Royal Highness King Hussein would attend in person.

All went well and King Hussein, who showed up amid appropriate pomp and circumstance wearing a nickel-plated Smith and Wesson revolver on his hip, was visibly enthusiastic about our presence. He only stopped smiling to express his concern about the possibility of a clash with an Israeli patrol. That would obviously have some serious ramifications in both U.S. and Jordanian affairs with Israel. The Israelis apparently did not know we were in Jordan and the King wanted to keep it that way for as long as possible.

We were to be tactically inserted by parachute in an area near the small village of Kurayyimah just two miles from the occupied West Bank and a scant 30 miles from the border with Syria. Because of the close proximity to potential hazards, we called for and were supplied with an American MC-130 aircraft. The bird had been assigned to support Operation Slyfox from the beginning and had been standing by in West Germany awaiting our call.

We pulled up to the airport in Amman at dusk and went through some last-minute inspections and preparations. Our transport landed right on schedule and the flight went without a hitch. That didn't keep our Jordanian SF troopers from getting antsy as we approached the DZ. Fidgeting in their seats, they anxiously waited for the go light. After receiving an Arabic "all okay," I turned and faced the open ramp and moonlit terrain that stretched out below. At the green light I was gone.

Since there were no markings on the drop zone we had briefed the flight crew to use the CARP (Computer Activated Release Point) system to drop us on target. It sounds good on paper but as I floated down to earth my respect for the CARP system dwindled. Instead of open terrain I saw the lights of a small remote settlement. The dogs were already starting to bark. I was convinced that some AK-toting Palestinian would look up, suspect we were a bunch of Israeli commandos and we'd wind up floating down into a fire fight.

No green tracers from the ground. I landed heavily, readied my weapon and pulled out a pair of PVS-5 night-vision goggles to help in finding my gear. Jumpers on the ground scanned the darkness for signs of activity from the settlement. Nothing moved. My teammates materialized from the darkness and we moved to our initial rendezvous site.

Movement in the desert terrain was fairly easy. In fact, it was a piece of cake as long as you didn't mind doing it all at night.

Israeli reconnaissance aircraft made it tough to move around during the day. And we didn't need that kind of attention.

During our rest stops we routinely made coded burst transmissions via radio back to our command element in Amman. These comms bursts, lasting only seconds, contained hundreds of characters in Morse code but were transmitted so fast that Israeli RDF gear could not pinpoint our location. Now that we had been inserted into a disputed area, it was important that we stay in touch and informed of any shifts in the political winds that might put Operation Slyfox and its advisers in jeopardy.

Since our mission included developing a good rapport with the locals, we often entered small villages to watch the Jordanians test their PR skills. The inhabitants took it all in stride. It was as if strange Americans came into their villages every day. We even stumbled on a band of nomadic Bedouin tribespeople. They were noticeably underwhelmed by American Green Berets in their desert home. The Bedouins and their ancestors had seen wars roll over these hills and plains for thousands of years. To them we were just the latest in a long line of foreign soldiers to defile the area. Always on the lookout for ways to supplement the U.S. RDF, we made a note that a study of the Bedouins should be conducted to determine the feasibility of recruiting them to act as scouts and insurgents. They would fill the bill in fine fashion.

Although the Jordanians were shaky in airborne operations, they moved confidently on the ground. Moving silently over the moonlit desert, they headed unerringly toward our objective. As daylight colored the desert on the morning after insertion, we pulled into covered base camps and prepared for the assault on each assigned objective. These were simple raids and ambushes using explosive simulators and blanks but that didn't take the edge off anything. Since they were to be executed near Israeli-occupied territory, any response from H&I artillery fire to armor assault was possible. Jordanian troops who were not needed for the assault on a particular training objective were assigned to secure the exercise area from enemy intrusion. They had the means.

Everyone was carrying a full load of live ammo.

By using Jordanians in both the friendly and aggressor roles we doubled the teaching value of each objective. By now we were convinced the Jordanians had the potential to become an effective part of the proposed Rapid Deployment Force in the area. They were clever, ruthless and determined to win. That conclusion had not been lost on the Israelis who kept a close eye on all operations near the border. Still, it seemed like we would complete the exercise without incident. And then the Jordanians got a bit over-confident.



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Our field evaluation was nearly complete when the senior Jordanian commander decided to lead his team further west to the border itself for a live-fire assault on an unoccupied position often used as an observation post by the Israelis. This operation would be a fire-and-maneuver sweep across the area and then a search for any usable information left behind by the Israelis. Hopefully, the Israelis wouldn't return fire. Naturally, we all wanted to go along.

As advisers, we were denied permission to have anything to do with the actual raid. That word came from the highest levels during one of our daily radio contacts. On the other hand, our people in Washington saw nothing wrong with the advisers taking part in the planning. Military assistance happens to be a Green Beret specialty. We were glad to lend a hand.

The Jordanians went all out to impress us with their professionalism while preparing for the assault. We returned the compliment by accompanying them to an observation point just short of their assault positions. Our nighttime jaunt to the objective covered about 16 klicks. Nothing stood in our way. At the ORP (Objective Rally Point) we left our counterparts and established our own security perimeter choosing a high point that gave us a spectators' view of the objective that the Jordanians would be hitting.

Like clockwork the Jordanian team initiated the assault with sustained M60 machine-gun fire from four different points. For three minutes, the night was lit by the evil glow of buzzing red tracers. Several fuel cells left behind by the Israeli troops burst into flames surprising the attacking Jordanians. But the blazing cans were a big help to us. We had no trouble seeing how the Jordanians were progressing in their exercise.

The commander radioed for his M60 gunners to lift and shift off the objective so that his coordinated assault teams could sweep across the area. And away they went.

Forging over the sand and scrub, they hit the objective and then pulled back for a quick search of the area. When the Jordanian commander was satisfied that they had secured the area, he ordered the assault teams off and organized his men to move them safely to the ORP. We linked up with them there and moved about another 15 clicks off the target. At a prearranged location in a deep ravine we rendezvoused with two vehicles belonging to the regular Jordanian armed forces. They drove us back to Amman that night.

Nobody doubted that the Israeli occupational forces would investigate the puzzling gunfire. We decided that it was best to exit the area and prepare for departure Stateside.

It felt good to be back in garrison. I didn't mind leaving behind the scorpions and six-inch centipedes. After a few hours of cleaning and packing up our equipment, we were treated to one last visit to the city. It was an anticlimactic time for everyone except one team member who had an unforgettable side

trip to Marxist Syria.

He accepted a dinner invitation at his counterpart's home. That seemed a nice gesture until he learned that his counterpart's home was three miles into Syria near the town of Busra ash Sham. At that point, there's nothing for a good Green Beret to do but do it.

There were a few tense moments as they approached Syrian territory but they passed safely through the lax border-crossing station. The dinner apparently went well but he was grilled extensively back in the States about what he had seen in the area and about how he got in and out of Syria so easily.

As we lined up on the tarmac for the flight home, the Jordanians sprang one last surprise on us. Each Green Beret was awarded Jordanian jump wings. Naturally, each of our counterparts inherited a set of American wings. Things degenerated from there and the customary uniform swapping moved into high gear. In a traditional SF gesture, we left behind a calling card. Each Jordanian team member received a Green Beret.

Things got fairly shitty on the return trip. The team medic insisted on taking stool samples from everyone as soon as we were airborne. There was some concern about parasites we may have picked up in the field. Things like that come with the job.

Washington was pleased with our performance and decided that our success warranted a rerun. Operation Slyfox would be conducted the following year. It would also serve as a stepping stone for joint Jordanian/U.S. exercises in this country. Naturally, The Company wanted a piece of us too. Our official photos plus any private shots that we may have taken were high on the CIA wish list. The Agency also had plenty of questions concerning the border tensions between Jordan and Israel.

I told them what I thought: that the U.S. should be actively involved in the region. Later in 1982, the administration heeded that advice. It's unfortunate it turned out the way it did for the Marines who followed us into the Middle East. ✕

EDEN PASTORA

Continued from page 31

"And what does the United States do? Instead of helping us to throw out the communists, they cut off our aid. They haven't given us a cent, a bullet or a boot for 10 months because we won't be their puppets.

"Not only that, they have been blocking our efforts to get aid from other countries. They've tried to discredit me, spreading the propaganda that I'm incoherent, erratic, unpredictable, even crazy. Am I incoherent because I want liberty for my country? Because I'm a nationalist?

"Moreover, they keep the world from knowing that we've liberated more than 10,000 square kilometers, an area more

than half the size of El Salvador. And we've done this with virtually nothing. What little we have, we captured from the *piricuacos* [a derogatory name for the Sandinistas] or receive from private individuals. We could suffer in the jungle for years, but how do you fight a huge army, supported unlimitedly by the Soviet bloc, without bullets? The situation is critical. If we don't receive support, my 7,000 men will face genocide with nothing to defend themselves and Nicaragua will become another Cuba."

The short, stocky *Comandante* led us into the shack and we lunched on white rice and some species of fried rodent. We ate with our hands but our meal was apparently a feast for the freedom fighters who had only rice to eat on many days in the jungle. A tactical radio hissed in the background.

When lunch was over, the *Comandante* heard a Sandinistas transmission on the transceiver. He snatched the mike and traded insults with them.

"Somoza sold out the country," he shouted. "You're giving it away. Somoza killed Sandino once. You're killing the memory of Sandino every day." Pastora hung up the mike and walked to a bundle of some 20 ancient German Mauser rifles leaning against a table.

"This is our anti-aircraft defense," he said. "It's our most powerful rifle. We fire at one plane at a time in volleys. Look at what a primitive system we've had to resort to because the Americans don't help us. Who knows? Perhaps next we may have to rely on arrows and stones.

"It's simple what the best American policy should be," he continued. "One: It shouldn't block the international aid we get. Two: It shouldn't block our rearguard." Pastora was referring to actions by Costa Rican authorities who have been cracking down on anti-Sandinista activities to maintain the country's neutrality.

"If the United States can, [it should] give us aid equal to that which it gives to the FDN," Pastora claims his forces only received 15 percent of the \$24-million worth of aid earmarked for the Nicaraguan resistance prior to the Congressional cut-off of covert aid. "And most importantly, treat us like allies. The Americans want us to say, 'Yes, man,' and do everything they want. We're not puppets. That's the same reason why we're fighting against the Cubans."

The *Comandante* took an hour siesta, then led his escort on a short hike upstream to another encampment. Before he left he gave me an *abrazo* and we joked. He wished me the best, then declared, "We shall always fight against dictatorship — whether it's from the right or the left."

An hour later I boarded a boat for Costa Rica with Tito Chamorro. "Guerrilla warfare is an up-and-down thing," said the freedom fighter who led the assault on San Juan del Norte and who later almost lost an eye beside Pastora at the press-conference bombing. "Now we're down. America needs to support us if we are going to save our country." ✕

COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Continued from page 10

Even if you don't create large numbers of casualties, the discovery of booby-traps in any area will significantly impede enemy movement.

One of the most familiar, simple and effective booby-traps which can be employed to slow down a pursuing enemy is the "frag-in-a-can." Large numbers of American troops were injured and killed by these devices in Southeast Asia. The VC and NVA certainly employed them consistently as cost-effective killers. Typically, there's not much to rigging the trap. Attach a wire or string to the neck of a grenade, run the trip wire across a path or trail and secure it to some fixed object. On the opposite side of the anchor point, fix a can — a large C-rat can will work perfectly — and shove the frag inside. After it is snug in its new home, pull the pin. The can will keep the safety lever from flying off until some poor fool saunters down the trail, bumps the trip wire and yanks the frag out of the can.

If there's time, training and equipment available, much more sophisticated traps can be employed in a number of common situations. It takes training to safely rig such devices and most units — especially special-operations units — should take the time to familiarize themselves with more sophisticated techniques. Electrically activated booby-traps are particularly effective. They can be set up to operate from trip wires, pressure or pressure-release initiating devices. Larger detonations, designed to cause mass casualties, are frequently rigged for electronic detonation.

Practice traps for classroom sessions can be constructed using batteries as power sources, wire as a current transmitter, and a flash bulb as the imitation explosive device. All such items can be easily and unobtrusively purchased at any electronics store. There's no end to the number of activators that can be employed. They can be light-sensitive switches which detonate when exposed to light entering an opened drawer or magnetic breakers that complete a circuit when disturbed. In short, training can be conducted with no damage to the training area.

Booby-trapping can be a dangerous business without constant, consistent training. Construction of the more sophisticated devices is best left to the engineers or demo-men. Amateurs looking to learn how to blow people up should be advised that limited skill can result in the booby-trapper becoming the booby-trapped. It's a devious game and too many players have discovered how easy it is to outsmart themselves. ✕



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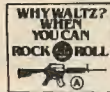
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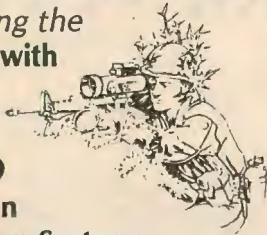
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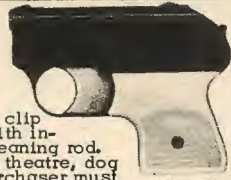
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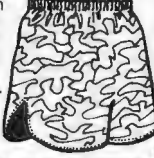
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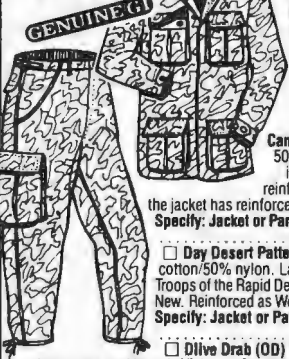
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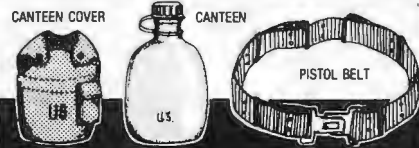
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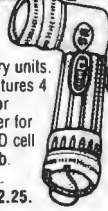
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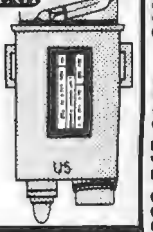
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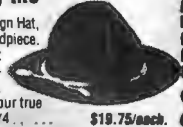


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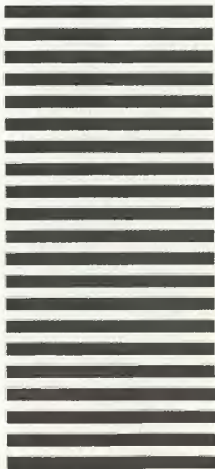
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